

The Green Sprout Journey' is the story of a mother trying to stimulate environmental awareness in her two children. Satoke Chatterjee launched on this journey and pleasantly discovered that when she initiated ecological activities within the space of her home, her children came up with their own ideas on how one could go about doing them. Some were very rewarding, and some less so. All in all, the children received a great foundation to become ecologically conscious citizens, as vitally needed in our times.

The book outlines in detail the various activities Satoke and her children immersed themselves in: composting and organic gardening; clay jewellery and other eco-crafts; book-making, scrap making, homemade solar cooler, etc.; and occasional 'discovery' trips in their locality.

This is a useful resource book for anyone desiring to initiate meaningful ecological activities within the home, or at the school level. While it offers interesting ideas and information for parents and teachers who want to make environmental education an important part of the upbringing of children, the book can also be independently read and enjoyed.

Satoke Chatterjee was born in Japan and has been living in India after her marriage. She came to Chandernagore, in West Bengal, India after having lived in Aureville in South India and Cambodia with her husband, Ardhendu Chatterjee and their two children, Skantou and Manou. She has been involved for the last ten years with ENRE (Ecology and Natural Resource Education), a project of DRCSC (Development Research Communication and Services Centre). Satoke also teaches Japanese in Kolkata.



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the green sprout journey

(Inspiring Home-based / Ecological Activities with Children)

SATORO CHATTERJEE



The Green Sprout Journey

*Exploring Home-based,
Ecological Activities with Children*

SATOKO CHATTERJEE

Earthcare Books

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by Sanku Chatterjee

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*To my children, Shantanu and Manasi –
who are the real creators of this book*

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Acknowledgements

Initially, I wrote down certain episodes for this book in Japanese, my mother tongue. It took two years for the work to reach this shape. In fact, the process of making this book was another journey for me, and I encouraged myself by thinking of this process as my dream project. With enormous help and support from many people, I am delighted that my dream has come true here.

First, I would like to thank my son, Shantonu, and my daughter, Manosi, who brought me the rich experiences I have tried to describe in this book. I hope that the various ecology-related practices and products created by both of them provide readers with good examples and ideas.

My thanks go out to Vinita and Bharat Manata for agreeing to publish this book as an Earthcare Books publication. I also wish to thank Maura Hurley-Basu who took up the tough task of tightening up my English. And I thank Orjit Sen for so creatively designing the cover out of his own good will. I would also like to thank Santayan Sengupta for helping me with the digital enhancement of the images in the book. I received useful suggestions and encouragement from all of these friends at every stage of this process.

My ten-year journey with Green Sprout, as well as the making of this book, are both endeavours that have been graciously backed by DRCSC (Development Research Communication and Services Cen-

me), an NGO my husband and I are deeply involved in. My basic conceptual understanding and attitude toward life-oriented Environmental Education has been nurtured through ENRE (Ecology and Natural Resources Education), one of the DRCSC projects. Here, I also thank my senior and junior colleagues at DRCSC, as well as the teachers, field workers, and eco-group children affiliated with the ENRE network – they have always included Green Sprout as one of their members. I also had help from the production unit of DRCSC for the initial typesetting of my manuscript.

Despite this book being a very personal narrative, in response to the cooperation and support I received, I tried to make it something that will contribute to the scope of eco-activities and related skill information for a wider readership, around and beyond 'home'.

From the book, it may appear that I am a very organized person – having kept all the documentation, photos and writings over such a long period of time. I can only say that this is a by-product of my work in the ENRE project, that I have been fortunately involved with as a developer of activity-based lesson plans. For this, I needed to provide concrete examples when designing my lesson plans, and so the trials and experiences with my own children became the examples I shared with the teachers of the network. And that is why I kept my documentation so carefully over a long time. Ask Green Sprout! Generally speaking, I cannot call myself a very organized person – as I am often misplacing important things in my daily life.

Besides home-based eco-activities, the process of making this book caused me to reflect upon the past activities I enjoyed with my children; and this, in turn, naturally made me think about parenting. Children grow up with great speed! So many new and unexpected experiences are constantly being thrown at

parents, as well as the children. I just think we need to keep learning from them all – whatever comes our way.

I thank my husband, Ardhendu, who is not mentioned by name in this book due to my Japanese cultural background. He checked the technical parts of the book and gave valuable suggestions for improvement. His expertise, guidance and rich knowledge of gardening and Environmental Education have provided me with the foundation for my practical applications. And in the matter of parenting, I thank him for having introduced me to the following words written by Rabindranath Tagore:

*O mother, child is not your wealth,
she belongs to herself/herself to the Universe,
to the creator of universe*

I constantly carry these words around with me and reflect upon their meaning every moment, as a mother and as a child.

I am glad to be living in such a nice corner of the Earth.

Lastly, I thank you – for having picked up this book in your hand. I hope you enjoy sharing a few moments with me, and I look forward to your feedback and ideas.

Satoko Chatterjee, March 2009

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PART I

Sowing Ideas

– Notes from Chandernagore –

In the Beginning

Introduction



How can a home participate in and contribute to Environmental Education? This is an account describing my experiences over a period of ten years as my family and I searched for an answer to this question.

In the beginning, I didn't have any such great aim in mind – I just needed something to do with my children. I never imagined that these ten years would pass by in the blink of an eye. I hope this personal account is something that can be usefully shared among young parents and educators alike. It is really for anyone who would like to do something constructive and interesting in their own surroundings.

Since I am from Japan and English is not my first language, I always need to have my writing checked. In fact, I asked my own children to check this work. I discovered how nice it is for parents to ask their children for help sometimes, and to learn from them. This is something special I have learned from our family's 'Green Sprout' activities.

And speaking of Green Sprout activities...

Getting started in Chandernagore

In the hot month of April 1997, our family moved to Chandernagore, a small town located 40 km north-west of

Kolkata, in West Bengal. For four years before this, we had been living in Cambodia, working for an NGO there. Our decision to move was prompted by a desire to educate our children in a place that used either my husband's or my own mother tongue. We chose India rather than Japan because we felt that our skills would be of more use in India.

If you have experienced making a big move to a new place, you will know how tough the first couple of years can be. There are so many little things to adjust to – new environment, new language, new schools, new people, new food, ... the list is endless.

Chandernagore offered us a good environment, with its many trees and ponds – away from the pollution, crowd and bustle of Kolkata. But commuting on a daily basis was a major problem that our family faced. Due to the nature of my husband's work, he had to spend most of his time away from home. He was mainly working in and around Kolkata. As a result, I had a tough time being the mother of two small children who needed looking after – not to mention the language problem.

Our son, Shantanu (then aged six), entered primary school, while our daughter, Manasi (then three-and-a-half), entered the local nursery school. Though our children seemed to be happy going to school, I was rather surprised by the education system here. I found that children, even at the primary level, had to take many tests and examinations. On the other hand, physical exercise was limited to two classes a week, in uniform. In Art class, children were asked to copy a picture – and got higher marks for better copying! This came as a bit of a shock for me, as I felt that such a system would stunt my children's creativity and diminish their interest in learning. I even thought that the children would hate their school. But both my children seemed to enjoy their schools despite such a system.

Later, I realised that the diversity of Indian culture meant that the children had many holidays for religious festivals and celebrations, and we would be able to have plenty of learning experiences outside of school. Thus, my worries slowly faded



away as I busied myself with picking up Bengali, and creating an atmosphere at home that was conducive to learning.

Planting our Young Bean Garden



Our house, located beside a big community pond, has a small garden space, and it is here that I started our 'home garden'. This initially consisted of flowering bushes and trees, and though my children were too small to actually dig a garden, they maintained the garden very well. Later, on the advice of their father, we planted

vegetables too.

Just before the monsoon of 1997, our home garden was 'officially' started. Owing to the limited garden area at our disposal, we mainly planted a variety of climbing plants (including Winged beans from Cambodia and many types of gourds) to create a rooftop garden.

The children's favourite work turned out to be harvesting, and they were very excited to harvest gourds bigger than their own heads! But the children were a bit disappointed when they found that gourds not harvested on time became hard and unfit to eat. Their disappointment did not last long, however, as they discovered that these gourds could be left to mature to provide seeds for future planting; and that the hard rind (shell) could be carved into lanterns or masks, or used as containers.

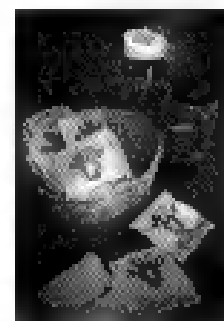
Besides these climbers, we also grew vegetables such as chillies, tomatoes, and carrots. The children found amusing ways to enjoy the vegetables. Shantonu made a 'hot crown' and Manosi made a 'hot necklace' with red chillies harvested from our garden! They also made puppets out of our home-grown vegetables.

The flowers turned out to be as useful as the vegetables. Hibiscus flowers not only made the garden look gorgeous but could also be used by the children for their 'meditation game'. This game was a great help for me as it gave me time to relax. Other than this lull, it was exhausting to look after the children all the time, especially during their holidays.

As you can see from the photos on page 101 the general look of our home is – a mess! Little children can easily convert 'organised cleanliness' into a mess. My advice to young parents is: save your energy – give up tidiness for the moment. A mess is harmless; so let children meditate in the chaos around them!

Check out examples of Home Garden techniques and various garden-based crafts in Part II.

Seed-pocket Project



Our garden entered its third year in 2000. By this time, the children gained more knowledge about the vegetables in the home garden, and they knew which plants were doing well. When we harvested more than we could eat, we shared the produce with our neighbours. We discovered that though Winged beans were not a familiar vegetable here, our neighbours received them quite favourably.

One day, I suggested to my children that we pack and sell the seeds of our plants. Both Shantonu and Manosi were tremendously excited and immediately agreed to this novel way of earning pocket money. "Selling?!" Manosi exclaimed, "We will be like a company!" Like true professionals, they quickly set about giving a name to our garden.

After some careful thought they came up with the name, 'Young Bean Garden'. Why? "Well," came the reply from Shantonu, "we are young (even *mother* :)), the seeds are fresh, and most of the plants grown in our garden are beans." There were a number of different reasons why most of the plants in our garden were beans. Besides being climbers, as mentioned earlier, beans are plants that, instead of consuming the nutrients in the soil, work to replenish the soil. Also, the fast rate of germination (most sprout within a week) meant that children were encouraged. We learned these kinds of things from the children's father.

Now, it was time for the staff of 'Young Bean Garden' to get together and discuss the details.

First on the agenda were the seed packets! Our meeting went something like this:

"Shall we use plastic packets so that everyone can see the seeds when they buy them?"

"Remember that plastic creates disposal problems, so I think paper packets will work much better."

After much deliberations, we finally decided on paper packets. I taught the children how to make packets out of brown paper, and in the process, taught them the basics of measuring and calculating. They were quick learners and were soon making these bags without my help.

Next topic on the list? Our logo. The children designed and carved the logo stamp out of potatoes, while I fashioned stamps for the letters out of erasers.

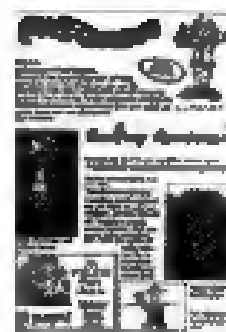
Finally came the hard part; now, we actually needed to extract the seeds. It was laborious, and quite time consuming. The dried Winged bean pods, in particular, did not want us to break them open – to the extent that Manusi resorted to using her feet to get the job done!

In its first year, Young Bean Garden produced three kinds of seed packets: Winged bean, Sword bean and Yam (a type of climbing plant yielding an edible tuber). The children wrote the name of the seed contained in each packet in both English and Bengali. We also inscribed an explanation sheet that was checked by their father, who always says that information distributed to other people must be clear and correct. We distributed the seed packets among our friends and received a favourable response. This encouraged us to try selling some through a 'Fair Trade shop' in Kolkata. Through these efforts, the children finally got their long-cherished pocket money – and spent it on sweets!

I enjoyed doing this first 'project' with my children. I realised that doing and learning together is fun, and also easier (easier with a capital 'E'!) for both parents and children. Children become immersed in their work, and parents get some breaks. Children are good at removing the distinction between work and play.

 Have a look at more details on 'Seed Packet Project' in Part II, page 123.

Writing about our Garden Activities



My children studied in English medium schools, with Bengali as a second language. Once Shantonu learned how to read and write at school, he wrote a short article about our garden activities for a few magazines. It was a proud moment when the children saw their own article appear in *Pennaculture* (Australia) and *Shipping News* (USA). A family friend also introduced the Young Bean Garden Project in her family newsletter. These were all really good opportunities for the children to communicate their experiences.

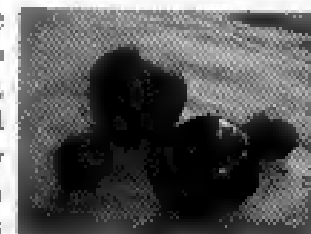
It would be so nice if this kind of seed project spread to other children, and more people started exchanging seeds – like letters or name cards. Why not?



Interesting information sources for home-based, eco-activities are shared on page 203.

Clay-discovery Crafts

Besides using produce from the garden, there were other kinds of crafts that the children enjoyed. One such craft was working with clay. Shantonu and Manusi brought the clay-soil required for this 'craft' from a nearby playground during the early rainy season (June-July). They made a range of fun items with their playground 'harvest'.



Shantonu discovered that the clay became very hard, as if fired in a kiln, after drying it in the shade for a few days. They made many small balls of clay and carefully dried them, and painted them with blue and green colours. They had created mini-Earth! By colouring one of the smaller balls orange, Pluto was created. In no time, they were playing with a miniature universe of clay and soil! You can also make incense sticks and candle stands and various figures with clay.

Clay items can last quite long. Once, Manusi dropped her 'Earth' by mistake, but it was strong enough to withstand the

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talk, it did not break. The earth is in your hands, so take good care of it.

See also page 105

Opening Ganapati Library

There is some thing that accumulates silently and steadily in our house. Unfortunately, it's not money – but books. The number of children's books was also increasing year by year and invading the space in our home. Using my experience as a resource centre worker for an NGO in Cambodia, I taught the children the basics of book-keeping. I asked them to enter all their book titles into a 'stock register' and to categorise them by subject, based on a simple system. I suggested they keep the books on a shelf according to the entry numbers. We decided that stories, nature & science books, general knowledge, art and language would be the six different subject-categories, each represented with a red, green, yellow, orange or blue sticker.

During their summer holidays, the children worked hard to enter about 700 titles into the Book Register. Finally, the books were arranged on the shelves in an organised manner. It looked so good. I'm sure the children must have felt a sense of achievement. We discussed sharing our book collection with others as a library, and even the children had a name, Ganapati. As you know, Ganapati is the name given to the god, Ganesha, during his childhood. Ganapati Library was opened only for the long school vacation. Sadly, since we did not have too many Bengali titles in the collection, the children from our neighbourhood did not use the library much, but some school friends happily visited it. Rules for using the library were simple: treat the books with care, and deposit three books in the Ganapati collection at some time during the vacation period, so that the shared library grows.

Because the books kept increasing, we made our own bookshelves, using old wooden containers that we got from vegetable

and fruit sellers. After washing the wooden boxes well, we made sure to dry them out thoroughly. We hammered in or pulled out any nails that were sticking out so that they were safe to handle. Then the boxes were painted to make them look pretty. Our handmade, low-cost bookshelves turned out angled at a slight slant, but they were just right for keeping our books. My children have never been very good at putting their books back properly after reading. In spite of a mutual agreement that new books would not be purchased until all books were being kept properly on the shelves, the number of books still seemed to keep increasing and being scattered here and there.

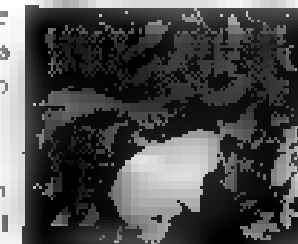
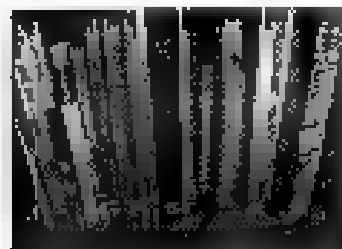
For a simple way to start and manage 'home library' check out page 126

Droppy and Yammy

Our garden-based activity was expanding gradually. It was November, which is a comfortable time of the year and we had another long vacation season – this time the Poyar, one of the biggest Hindu festivals in this region. Manoni and Shantonu found two different types of caterpillars. They told me, "These caterpillars will become butterflies. We saw it in our text book." But they had not seen it with their own eyes. So, I asked Manoni and Shantonu if they wanted to keep both the caterpillars and record their observations. They eagerly agreed.

The first thing the children did was to name each of the caterpillars. Children are fond of naming things. The hairy caterpillar was called 'Yammy' because it had been eating Yam leaf at a great speed. The other non-hairy caterpillar was called 'Droppy,' because it looked like a bird dropping on a leaf.

The children made houses from glass jars for both caterpillars. Manoni, who was then in Class 1, kept a very detailed record, while Shantonu, a Class 3 student at the time, kept a 'summary' record, with very few explanatory notes. I felt that both ways were acceptable. Each person has his or her own way of doing a task. Writing errors made by Manoni were also acceptable because

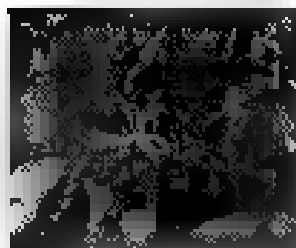


young people learn to write in this way – after all, we were studying calligraphy, not grammar. I kept my own record along with the children. This was a pleasurable experience for me too.

Well, what happened? Yami Yami became a moth (not a butterfly) and Droppy became a butterfly! Both of them were beautiful. We released both of them from their houses – and they flew into the sky. Congratulations and thanks to Droppy and Yami Yami! Through this simple experience, my children were always able to identify the family and friends of Droppy and Yami Yami from then on.

 Have a look at the actual records on Droppy and Yami Yami on page 98.

Friend-Trees



We have 'Friend-trees' in our garden. Shantonu's friend-tree is a Champa (*Michelia champaca*) tree. We purchased the seedling from the local nursery and transplanted it into our garden. Champa was smaller than Shantonu at that time, but has been growing very quickly. The Champa was almost the same height as Shantonu in November 1999. Within a year, it overtook

Shantonu and became as tall as a basketball player. Two years later, the Champa tree reached the second floor window of the house. Hello, hello,

During the rainy season, the Champa blossoms with creamy white colours that exude an exquisite fragrance. You can see the record Shantonu made. Although he once commented that "keeping a record in the garden is too much trouble and I get too many mosquito bites," his friend-tree record became valuable and memorable to him much later on. In any case, do you want to see our Champa tree in March 2007? It is now taller than our house – a great tree, isn't it! (See page 92)

My own friend-tree is Annatto (*Bixa orellana*). This is actually not a tree, but a bush, so the maximum height of Annatto is around 2-3 meters. I planted this from a seed that I brought from Birbhum district. When we visit places and see attractive plants, we often collect a few seeds if possible – as a souvenir. The im-

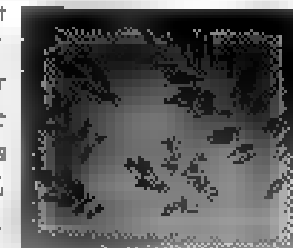
portant thing is not to become too disappointed when germination doesn't happen as well as expected after sowing the seeds. The Annatto was actually the result of only one seed germinating among 10-12 seeds that had been sown. I too kept a record of my friend-tree's growth. For me, it was really amazing to see how fast plants and trees grow here in India. In a cooler country like Japan, plants tend to grow much slower.

Besides having a very elegant flower, the Annatto is known as a plant for dyeing because its seeds give off a bright orange-yellow colour. This is used as a natural colouring for butter and other food items. As an experiment, we tried dyeing a piece of cloth with Annatto seeds. The result was a soft, milky orange colour.

 See the detailed report on our Friend-Trees on page 92.

Cloth Tapestry

Using leaves from the various plants and trees in our garden, we made a cloth tapestry. This was also an interesting art project to undertake with children. I used a low-cost marker cloth as the base. It has a natural off-white colour and costs around Rs 20-30 per metre. You also need fabric paints, which can be bought at any stationery shop in small bottles at about Rs 4 each. To do the printing, you will first need to collect various types of leaves. Next, colour them by painting on one side. Carefully press the leaf on the cloth and remove to see your leaf print. (page 102)



Some important tips are:

- 1) Be sure you don't dilute the fabric paint with water.
- 2) Put colour on the reverse side of the leaf to give a better impression.

Removing the leaf from the cloth is the most exciting moment for children. With this style of leaf printing, you can make home-made tapestries and curtains. You can also enjoy

making original cloth shopping bags and T-shirts. Since we used acrylic-based fabric paints, the colour is not lost after washing.

I introduced this method of printing on fabric to some teachers at NGO run schools. We also made leaf posters to study the various types of leaves around us. Doing it this way is better than using chart paper, because cloth posters last longer and are handy to carry here and there. Moreover, these can easily be made by children – it's a lot of fun. This eco-project comes to me fully guaranteed by our own home-based trials.



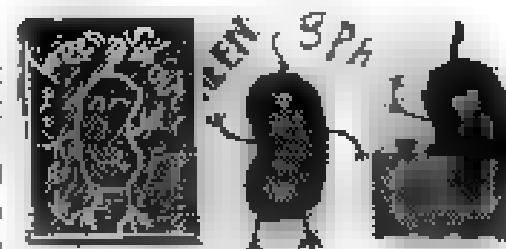
Here Comes Green Sprout!

Green Sprout is Born

Around 1999, when I became more comfortable conversing in Bengali, I started working part-time for Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRSC), an NGO my husband, along with

some other people, established in the early 1980s in Kolkata. The main work assigned to me was in the environmental education project. I was to design activity-based lesson plans for NGO teachers who promote the understanding of ecological issues through observation and survey of local natural resources. Needless to say, the various activities I was doing with my children at home were a great help for developing ideas for this work.

By 2001, this environment education project had progressed enough to be able to create children's eco-groups for each of the participating areas located in five different districts across West Bengal. The project then tried to link all the eco-groups to form a network. Feeling that my own children had gained sufficient experience through assisting me over the past three years or so, I encouraged them to join the network by making their own eco-group. By doing this, they were able to connect with the eco-groups in other places. Most of the members of these eco-groups were Class 6-8 students, and each group consisted of 8-10



children. Though Shantonu and Manosi were younger than the members of the other groups, and their group size was small, they were glad to join the network as a home-based eco-group.

All eco-groups were requested to name their group. Shantonu and Manosi came up with theirs rather easily. Green Sprout. They explained their choice, saying – they had started with Young Bean Garden, and a bean becomes a 'Sprout' after germinating. Green – because they were doing something related to the environment. Put these ideas together and you get

Green Sprout. "Sounds good, and is nice. Beans, sprouts are nutritious and tasty too," I remarked. In the meantime Shantonu had already drawn a picture of Green Sprout. It looked cute so all of us decided this would be the logo for the group. My two little earth friends had taken their first steps as 'Green Sprout'.

The next thing the children had to think of was the group structure. After some discussion, we decided that Shantonu would be the Group Leader, Manosi would be the Sub-leader-cum-Accountant, and I would be the Facilitator-cum-Fund supporter. Oh yes – we added as a thought – their father should also be included in this home-based eco-group, otherwise it would be unfair. Without even asking him, we decided that he would become part-time Adviser since he was out of station most of the time. 'Green Sprout' now seemed to be officially inaugurated.

After some time, Manosi had a problem. She was unhappy because her older brother was always the leader while she was always sub. She complained with puffed cheeks, "This is not fair." Her point seemed valid to me. I explained how important the work of an accountant is. Manosi finally appreciated the significance of her position and agreed to take on the work. I added one more point to the discussion, saying that "I am happy to provide funding for Green Sprout, but I want to later get back at least half of it. What I mean is, Green Sprout needs to be self-sustainable by earning some income so that part of the money can eventually be returned to me." Our Green Sprout accountant immediately questioned with great anxiety, "What! Can we really do that?" Soon, we had moved on to discussing how to earn an income as Green Sprout. One way would be by selling the Young Bean Garden seeds and other garden crafts the children

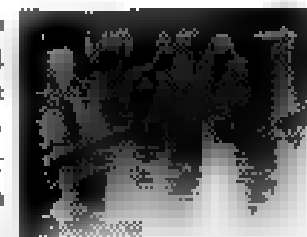
had already collected or made. Manosi was happy that she could keep the accounts since she was in Class 2 and knew how to add and subtract.

The role of the group leader would be to ensure that all members work together in harmony and to represent the group in a wider network. The Green Sprout Leader, Shantonu, was in Class 4 at that time. Though he was much younger than other group leaders, we felt he could manage his role well because Green Sprout would be there to accompany him. Actually, we all thought of 'Green Sprout' as more than just our name but also an adorable little member of our group.

P Yes. This is how – was born, "Hello!" to all of you

Green Sprout Observes – Our experience with birds

Sometimes in March 2000, when the weather was beginning to get hotter day by day, a bird accidentally entered one of the rooms and hit the ceiling fan, whirling around like the propeller of a helicopter. Sadly, the bird died. After checking a Bird Guide – we learnt that it was a Magpie Robin, with its black body, white breast, and upright tail. We buried the Magpie Robin under a tuberose tree in our garden. After this incident, we immediately put off the fan whenever a bird came near the window in order to avoid another such accident.



This kind of incident brought us emotionally closer to Nature surrounding us – the trees, insects, water, medicinal plants, birds, fish, etc. living right near us. It can be called an 'experience' or 'encounter' with Nature, rather than just an 'observation.' This particular encounter definitely increased our interest in birds. You may have had a similar experience too. Think about it – If you ask someone, "What kind of experiences have you had with birds," rather than typical questions like, "What birds do you know," you are sure to get more interesting answers.

We see various birds because there is a big pond beside our house – and many trees, unlike in a big city. Whenever we encounter a new bird, we look it up in *The Book of Indian Birds*,

mark it, and write down the date beside that bird's description in the book.

Early one morning, we were surprised by a busy sort of sound coming from the rooftop — *kon, kon, kon, kon, kon*. When we went to investigate, we found a woodpecker at work on a bamboo pole we used for hanging clothes. The red spot on the head of the woodpecker was very impressive.

We also had some more interesting birds. One day, I saw a peacock-blue Kingfisher dive into the pond to catch a fish. It always appears as a moment to me when the bird is about to take its prey. It takes its position on a tree branch after its catch. It held the fish with its beak and forced it through the fish against the branch. The Kingfisher broke off the head of the fish this way and then swallowed the remaining body in a flash. Amazing! I excitedly recounted this to my children when they returned home from school. "Hmmm, is that true? I do not like eating the fish."

From the Llanapad bankment: birds, birds, birds

[illegible]

Marshall had a great deal to talk about from my Windows side when he turned the car around and was being welcomed by the two nannies. He then returned to his study he descended through the windows at his house to meet my car and he walked with me.

My letter between Book 1, Part 1 and Part 2 contained the
 names of the page title was not a good idea
 now the information. To get Part 2 to a good state
 will be an idea to get the information. I will be
 the same as the other books.

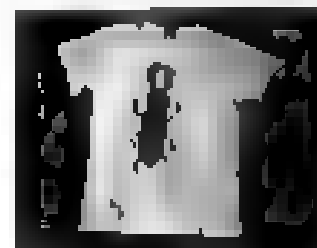
head either," Stanton agreed. I thought that maybe it was only that one particular Kingfisher that did not like fish heads, but later on, I paid closer attention and witnessed the same behaviour several times. From this experience, I realised that Kingfishers are very clever and skilful, and they do not like fish heads!

Such observations are fun and exciting for both children and parents. They are like small treasures of discovery, and bring a special sort of satisfaction to daily life.

Each bird has its own really fashionable style and attractive body colour and design. The children drew some of the birds they had seen on a cloth using fabric paints. The painting turned into a masterpiece wall hanging! They also painted a bird on a cloth bag and this became a unique gift for their grandparents in Japan. Manon later made her own 'bird booklet' with colour pencils. Green Sprout would like to comment here that although observation alone might be boring and short-lived, if you expand from there, by making various crafts, discussing, and keeping a record, observation becomes very enjoyable and memorable.

 Our latest Manuscripts are freely available on page 106

Green Sprout is Committed - Our experience with insects



The following story is another Green Sprout anecdote. This time it occurred on an ordinary school day morning. Mamei suddenly screamed as she was eating her breakfast, "Aaaaaahh!" Utterly shocked, I ran to her from the kitchen and asked what had happened.

She exclaimed, 'The cat just walked away'
'What?' I asked, 'do you mean THE cat?'
'Yes.' Manosi nodded.

THE ant was a big black ant, one that had somehow found its way onto the plate covering a bowl of milk inside the fridge. It had just stayed there, and had chilled to 'death'. Manosi

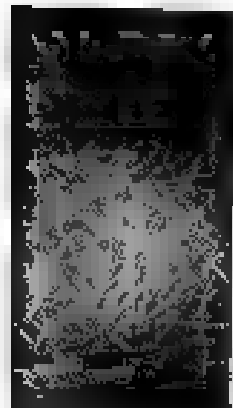
discovered it when she was taking the milk out of the fridge. She asked me what she should do. I told her to leave the ant where it was and eat her breakfast instead. There was a gap of 5-6 minutes before I heard Manu's blood-curdling scream! According to witnesses (the children) the dead ant started moving slowly, then started walking away from the plate, and finally right off the dining table. Manu kept her jaw dropped in surprise having long forgotten her bowl of corn flakes. "It's been revived, hasn't it?" Shantonu asked, puzzled.

After a few days, the children's father returned from one of his work trips. We told him our story. He explained to us that because ants are cold-blooded creatures, the ant looked dead, but the cold temperature of the refrigerator had only immobilised it. Now, we all read about cold-blooded and warm-blooded creatures in our primary school science text books, but this 'rebirth' of our ant brought to life the textbook definition of cold-blooded creatures, creatures which instead of generating their own body heat, have the same body temperature as the surrounding environment.

✎ See page 158 in Children's Magazine, Issue, Sep. 2002

Green Sprout Fails

- Our experience with vermi-composting



Though we may try many things, there is no guarantee that we will always triumph. Failure is part of the deal. One such failure for Green Sprouts was our experience with vermi-composting. Vermicomposting is made with a certain kind of earthworm that turn kitchen waste into compost. I thought this sounded like the ideal eco-activity for us to try out at home, so I decided to gather more information on it. After having a strategy meeting with the children, Green Sprout members took action.

Various materials were required for this mission. We needed the earthworms, straw and soil for the bedding, cow dung or nitrogen-rich compost for feeding the worms, and finally, a container for making the compost. Our

spirit steadily fell as we viewed this list. Would we actually have to procure all that? Well, first we had to get straw. I remembered having seen a furniture shop at the nearby market where they seemed to be selling straw. I thought we could get it from there. Next, we needed cow dung. Even though Chanderi is a small town, cows do often roam the street in front of our house. I suggested to the children that we collect the cow dung from the street. "Oh, no-o-o," they said, but they followed me out to collect our cow dung stash, albeit quite reluctantly. While collecting the cow dung with a small shovel, I explained to the children, "You know, cow dung is actually a very clean substance. It has the power to kill germs, so much so that villagers use cow dung mixed with straw pieces as a building material, and for plastering the floors of their homes. It really has no offensive smell." The children, however, had their own opinions. "This is so smelly!" they immediately exclaimed. Anyway, we managed to procure some cow dung for our mission.

We then collected 5-6 earthworms from our garden. Though we actually needed a certain type of earthworm - actually red wigglers - we decided there were too many actually, and it wouldn't matter too much as we just used what we could get. We thought "it's okay to compromise." For the container, we brought a wooden box home from a vegetable vendor in the neighbourhood. It didn't look all that strong, but seemed good enough to serve our purpose.

With our preparations completed, the actual work began. Under my supervision, the children started cutting the straw into 3-4 cm pieces, using garden scissors, and breaking down soil to make it soft. Meanwhile, I tried to make a compost solution by mixing cow dung with water in a bucket. Oh yes, I was also in charge of taking pictures for our record keeping. We were all struggling with the process as we sweated it out in the heat. In addition to this messy situation, we had to fight off the mosquitoes that were attacking us. In my mind, I held onto a shining image of my family recycling all our kitchen waste in an ecological way through this vermi-compost bin. This drove us on despite all the itching and sweating. The mission was much harder than we expected. I needed to prepare lunch too, so we finished hurriedly.

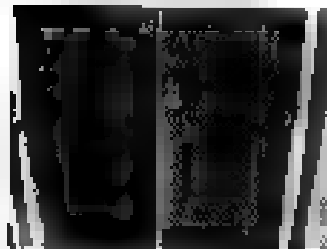
Next, we had to figure out how to maintain our vermi-

compost arrangement. We needed to maintain the correct level of moisture in the container by watering it every day, especially if the earthworms were firmly settled. But sometimes, we forgot to water it, and as a result of our own laziness, the vermi-compost totally dried in a few weeks under the hot sun we have here. I hope the poor earthworms evacuated themselves safely from the container. Sorry to them, and sorry to us – this was a case of ‘Mission Incomplete’, in spite of having spent so much time and energy in preparing and building. In the meantime, the box of compost totally collapsed. It was a perfect failure. This unsuccessful experience annoyed us, and – must say, we never tried vermi-composting again.

Our next encounter with vermi-composting was when we saw it being practised at another place – in a large earthen pot. We could see the beautifully rich blackish compost in the container. “You see, I just put my kitchen waste in here like this, and the remaining work is done by the earthworms,” explained the owner, smiling. The members of Green Sprout were looking at each other’s faces, all thinking the same thing, “How come everything looks so easy when other people do it?” Honestly, we all felt a bit jealous then, but we certainly did learn from our failure.

Ar: How to make vermi-compost is explained on page 14. We wish you can
H: successfully pursue it. All the best!

Green Sprout Makes it Through – Our experience with fish



I guess every family has its own ups and downs, with some significantly fortunate and some less fortunate periods. We had a terrible incident a mere four years after moving to Chandernagore when four or five burglars tried to enter our house. It was a mid-February night in 2001, just as the

season was changing from a declining winter to early spring. When I went to lock the outside gate, a man suddenly came out from the garden and pushed me back onto the collapsible gate. I was so

surprised to see that he had a big knife in his hand. I was momentarily disoriented. When I saw more men appear, I got really frightened and raised an alarm, screaming as loud as I could.

When the burglars pushed me backwards, I fell down over a big earthen pot that turned over and broke. Suddenly, water was gushing all over the entrance floor. Under the dim light, the burglars must have been quite surprised, even terrified, for a split-second. The pot was our guppy pond. Guppies are small fish known to be larva-eaters, which is why we kept this pot at our door to ward off mosquitoes. Thanks to the guppies, we were protected not only from mosquitoes but also from the startled burglars, though the fish all died in the line of duty.

Anyway, I took advantage of this unexpected turn of events and tried my best to block off the half-opened door to prevent the burglars from entering my house. Having heard my shouts, Shantonu came running down the stairs, raising a huge racket by hitting the stairs with a stick and yelling out, “Ha! Ha! Ha!” Luckily the burglars started running away, one by one. They must have thought that my little ten-year-old Shantonu was a much bigger guy. Later, the police praised Shantonu, saying how courageous he was. To be honest, Shantonu was not even aware that there were burglars at that time. He only thought I was yelling – as usual – about some cat that had entered the house through the windows. I must say that I am a lucky mother because my children know – scream a lot even over a small thing, yet, every time they come to my rescue.

Partly because of this incident, I decided to take a break from India and went back to Japan during the children’s summer holidays that year. It was a jip back to my home country after four years. I stayed with the children at my parents’ place. We certainly had a nice time there, and the children even attended the local primary school in Japan for one week as guest students. They had a really lovely time with friends there.

We returned from Japan with sweet memories. But soon after Manasi got chickenpox, which may have been a souvenir from Japan. Shantonu contracted it soon after that. In addition to the extra leave we took for the extended summer holiday, then both had to take more leave due to this bout of chickenpox. Manasi had difficulty catching up in some subjects, particularly

Bengali. As a result, she was not promoted to the next class in spring, and was told she would have to repeat Class 3 the following year. Honestly, I could not believe a school would do this to a primary level child, though it seems to be a common practice throughout India. Including my daughter, there were 4-5 other repeaters in her class. Since Manosi had been enrolled in primary school a bit early, we thought that repeating a year might actually be a good adjustment for her though we worried that she might get discouraged. Losing confidence and pride is a big problem for any child. Of course, she was upset at first, but she soon made new friends in her new class and continued with school happily.

These kinds of burdensome experiences affected me more than the other family members, and perhaps due to stress, I started having severe back pain. I had a very hard time with this for close to seven months, from September 2001 until the following spring. Since that time, I have been unable to carry any heavy objects and have avoided riding my bicycle. My children have been helping me a lot with household chores. And, though we had planned to shift house again that spring, we decided against it. Chandernagore would have to bear with us a little longer!

That spring the *kiet* (cuckoo) seemed to call out to me. "Take it easy, take it easy, don't worry, don't worry..." It gave me a gentle healing touch, and also an important reminder to be more careful to look after myself always.

Oh yes, I also now know that guppies are very efficient in controlling mosquitoes. My family recommends you keep some guppies too. They are very beautiful fish – and easy to keep.

✦ If you want to keep your own guppies, refer page 67 on how to make small ponds.

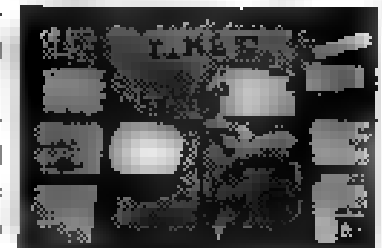
Green Sprout Spreads Out

Green Sprout Launches its Children's Magazine

Small children observe the actions of their mother and father to the finest detail, and often try to copy what their parents do.

One day, Manosi told me that she wanted her own office. My back pain had somewhat lessened by this time, and I was involved in making booklets as an assignment for the environmental education project. Since I work from home, I have always called the small table I use 'my desk' and tell the children that the space surrounding my desk is 'my office'. This was a strategy I developed for making them understand the distinction between home and office/work and play – and it signalled to them that they should not disturb me during the times I am at the desk in my office. After having seen me spread papers and reference materials out on my desk while I was working, Manosi told me, "I want my own desk too."

"Patience, patience..." I muttered to myself as I set up a small table for Manosi, a little away from my desk. At first, Manosi happily worked on her drawings and home tasks on the table, but she gradually started feeling a bit dissatisfied with this situation. I guess she started thinking that her own desk should be in her own office, just like her mother's set-up, and that area should be different from what she saw as her study desk. She



started hanging out around me again, and quite frankly, annoying me while I worked.

"Patience, patience . . .," I repeated to myself as this frustrating situation continued. I decided to just ignore her and tried to concentrate on my work, but it was so difficult with her just loitering about me with such a pondering face. Finally, I hit upon a good idea and I said to her "Manosi, you better do your work at your desk. How about making a newsletter or magazine on your own?" One thing led to another, and soon the members of Green Sprout were having another discussion, which ended with us all deciding to publish a newsletter.

Manosi was chosen as editor of the Green Sprout newsletter which was now named *Children's Magazine*. She asked me about the kind of work an editor does. Shantnu and I explained to her that an editor is in charge of making the magazine: deciding on content, themes, articles and illustrations, and designing the layout just like I was doing for my work. She looked happy and honoured at first, but after a pause, she asked again "But Shantnu will do all the articles and illustrations, won't he?" We explained to her that creating a magazine could not be just one person's job, that various people must contribute to the writing and illustrations. Manosi's questions, however, continued. "What is layout?" she asked. "Layout is deciding upon the positioning of the articles and illustrations on each page, fitting them all in," we assured her. "Hmmm . . ." Manosi finally got a picture of her work and looked content. The making of *Children's Magazine* had started. Manosi, as if she was a professional, was now busy, carrying her bag containing papers and files and going to 'her office' every day, where she was finally able to seriously start her work at her desk.

Later, our editor began to call for editorial meetings! Other staff members, Shantnu and myself, had to attend these meetings to decide on the topic for each issue. This led to serious discussions. Some of the topics we selected for *Children's Magazine* were similar to those in the booklets I had been preparing for the NGO, but some were exclusively Green Sprout topics. The first *Children's Magazine* was launched in August 2002. It had a headline, a contents page, essays, interviews, jokes, game pages, quizzes and prizes, an editorial message, etc. and it looked so good!

Since this was a magazine, it seemed meaningless to just keep it at home after it was made. It needed circulation, so we made copies, and coloured them by hand to make them look more appealing. We sold these at Rs 5 per copy. The expenditures on photocopying and stationery were paid out of the sale earnings, and the children also got some pocket money from it. The whole activity made our editor, Manosi, extremely proud and happy. Both the children were encouraged when readers asked, "When will the next *Children's Magazine* be out?" I became a fan of this magazine myself, so even I was urging them on, telling Manosi how much I wanted to read the next issue. She gave a surprisingly professional reply, "Then you must get busy and submit your article for the next issue soon." I felt she was handling the role of editor better than I ever would have.

Issues of *Children's Magazine* continued to be published. In 2002, the main themes were 'Trees' (August), 'Insects' (September), 'Water' (October), and 'Birds' (November). Then, in 2003, we had *Manpower* (March-April), *Animals* where the children wrote about animals they had seen (May-June), and *Sports* (July-August). A total of seven issues were published in two years.

These copies of *Children's Magazine* had a wider circulation when their father visited other states in India. Some issues were even sent to a Japanese NGO for an Eco-exhibition. In return, the children received funny jokes, articles, and similar magazines prepared by other children's eco-groups in India and Japan. Through creating of our *Children's Magazine*, Green Sprout learned that to send information is to receive information. But from 2004, the *Children's Magazine* suddenly stopped being published anymore, as Manosi and Shantnu's interests started shifting to other things which took up more of their time.

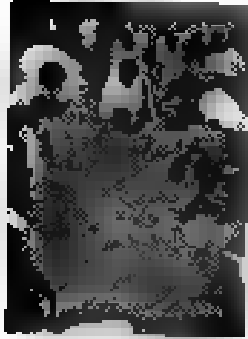


You can read the complete series of *Children's Magazine* in Part B!

Green Sprout Networks: Becoming part of a team

In January 2003, a get-together exhibition was organised in Kolkata by the eco-network of which Green Sprout was a member. It was an enjoyable and meaningful opportunity for each group to show and demonstrate what they had done over the last 2-3 years. Stu-

den and teachers from Kolkata who visited the exhibition, commented that this was an eye-opener for them as they got a feel of the variety of natural resources in the rural areas where most of the participants came from.



Green Sprout had its own corner to display and demonstrate our art vines. Though Shamoni (age 13) and Manoni (age 9) were younger than the other participants, they exhibited 'Ecological Crafts' as their theme which they explained with the help of topic traps and samples of what they considered to be ecological crafts. As a demonstration, they showed how dried orange peels could be burned as a mosquito coil.

Participants went away feeling how much fun it was to make such items. Green Sprout earned Rs 200 selling their eco-crafts during the exhibition.

After the network also organized two skill camps and once again, Green Sprout participated. Both Shamoni and Manoni learned compost-making, tree nursery skills like grafting, and how to build a solar cooker. The children participated in these camps partly because I was one of the organisers. I had to take them along since there was no one at home to look after them. Unlike the joint families, which are still common in India, ours was a nuclear family. Although taking the children along with us on business trips required extra responsibilities and preparation, in my case, I felt fortunate to have their company – this was always a big help to me and a great source of encouragement.

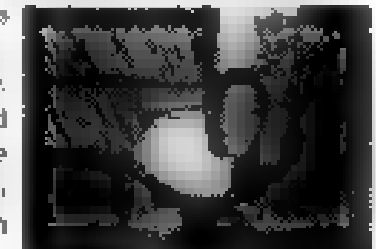
The same is true for their father who has to spend a lot of time away from home, as his work involves training NGO workers in various places. The only way the children and I could spend time with him was during the children's school holidays when we could accompany him. Making this family situation work for us, we have had the opportunity to visit most of the districts in West Bengal, as well as some other states of India over the last ten years. Of course, these were not exactly holiday trips! Most of the places we visited were rural areas, and the children and I also attended parts of the training sessions. On such occasions, the children were given notebooks just like other trainees, and even listened to the sessions on

sustainable agriculture. Sometimes their father would ask them what they had understood from these talks, so they needed to pay close attention. At the same time, it was also a good opportunity for the children to observe how their father worked. When he was not in the mood to attend the trainings, they spent their time doing things like helping out in the kitchen, playing with sand and fallen leaves in the compound, reading books, chatting with people, etc.

All of these experiences brought the members of Green Sprout closer and more appreciative of each other and of other participants.

Green Sprout Respects Humour – Our tips for living

What do you do when things do not go as you expected them to? Many people might think life in India is tougher than say, Japan, where everything is well organized and convenient. There certainly are distinctions – rush-hour, air-conditioning, nice dry-then weather, crowded transport, litter strewn about, air and noise pollution, slow and interfering government civil services, repairmen who don't turn up when they say they will. The long list of negative things caused me a lot of stress during my first two or three years in Chandernagore. But I thought to myself, what about the people here? For the most part, Bengali people don't look very anxious. So, what is their secret?



One day, my husband told me, "No matter how much you hurry, the train you are riding will not run any faster." By this he meant that I should not worry or get upset over situations that are beyond my control. After this, I felt that I had a glimpse into the Bengali philosophy of life.

On another occasion, he told us about a rickshaw-puller he had hired to return home from one of his training sessions. This rickshaw-puller called out to him, saying, "Dada, Grandpa, take a ride!" Now, this ordinarily wouldn't have annoyed my husband, however, this very same rickshaw-puller used to call him, "Kaku" (uncle) not much earlier. Everybody who was listening to his story

felt sorry for him, but he also delivered the punch line – “I’m happy to declare that I have successfully developed from a *Kaka* into a *Dada!*” This made growing older seem a lot better.

My husband often relates jokes and funny anecdotes like this both at home and during his training sessions. Though I hear the same jokes from my husband over and over, I still laugh. Most of his jokes are about a mythical person called Naseeruddin, and through this Naseeruddin character, he once told me a story of people who are just like me. One day Naseeruddin and his group of friends, who loved sharing jokes, were gathered together as usual. One of them commented about, “We often repeat the same jokes over and over, but we still end up laughing. So, why don’t we save ourselves some time and just number the jokes?” They all agreed to his very practical suggestion.

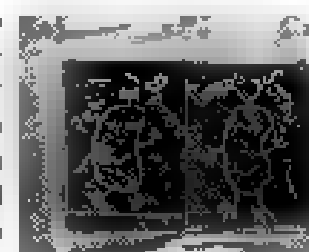
According to a mutually understood system of numbering, one guy yelled out, “Number 6.” This made the rest of the bunch burst out in great laughter. The next guy then silenced them and called out, “Number 29!” whereby all of them once again burst out laughing and guffawing in great glee. “Number 11” suggested another one of them, and the rest laughed till tears filled their eyes. Then, the next guy called out, “Number 17.” But not a single person laughed this time. The guy was a bit surprised and asked what was wrong? His friends explained to him, “You just didn’t say the number in the right way.” This Naseeruddin joke made me laugh again, followed by a rather venomous thought, “I wish I could share jokes like my husband does. I hope I am not like this Number 17 guy.”

Though I am not a good joke teller, I feel that having a sense of humour is a necessity for living here. We are always sharing funny stories about our experiences at school, on the way to office, or shopping, and we simply laugh about them all. You can try it too. In fact, Green Sprout highly recommends this! When you laugh, you feel better – even when you are in a tough situation. Green Sprout thinks that jokes and humour deserve respect because they provide us with a different way of looking at the world around us – and we think you will agree!

☺ Enjoy the ‘Jokes’ section of *Children’s Magazine*, too.

Green Sprout Finds a Mate – Welcome Pea Sprout!

Green Sprout is a bean, of course. Neither my children or I thought it would matter whether Green Sprout was a boy or a girl. But after awhile, we all started thinking that Green Sprout might be lonely and needs a companion to work alongside him. “Let’s find a girlfriend for Green Sprout,” Manosi exclaimed, and Pea Sprout was created. Pea Sprout made her debut in the April-May 2003 issue of *Children’s Magazine*. She has just one hair tied with a ribbon, and loves sports and peace.



I remember that Manosi was in Class 4 and Shantonu was in Class 7 when Pea Sprout was born. This is generally the time when children start becoming conscious of differences between boys and girls. It is an important stage when both boys and girls grow to have an understanding of each other and begin to acquire a cooperative and respectful attitude toward each other. Unfortunately, most schools in West Bengal are not co-educational, so children have less opportunity to have such interactions at school.

As a general observation here, girls who reach Class 3 or 4 (age 8-10) do not play outside any more. When Manosi was smaller (before Class 1 and 2) she used to play with some other girls in a corner of the playground. This group of girls would usually play make-believe games like cooking-and-serving or school-play, and hide-and-seek. On the other hand, Shantonu played football and cricket with other boys. After a while, when Manosi entered Class 2-3 age, most of the girls gradually stopped playing outside. So, she was left alone and just followed her brother around. Slowly, she started to play with the boys who would include Manosi as their friend. When they played football, Manosi was, of course, first given the less important positions where the ball rarely went, but gradually she improved her game skills and was treated just like any other team member. Since this time, Manosi has been playing football with the neighbourhood boys – even when Shantonu could not play due to his studies. Several younger boys have joined too, and Manosi is now called ‘Dada’ (elder sister in Bengali).

Manosi was a bit disheartened that no other girls would join her in playing football. As a Class 4 girl, she expressed her thoughts well in *Children's Magazine* (July-August 2005). Though she finally gave up the hope of other girls joining her, Pea Sprout was always firmly backing Manosi up.

One day, Manosi returned home from the playground very angry. She said to me, "You know, during the game, when somebody makes a mistake or doesn't play well, the boys say *myeder moto blutah na*. Don't play like a girl!)" What does that mean?" I turned to my son, Shantonu, who immediately shrugged his shoulders and defended himself by saying, "I didn't say that." All I could do was smile. Manosi asked me sharply, "Why are you laughing?" The reason I had smiled (it wasn't that I was actually laughing, more of a knowing grin) was that I felt it funny, because we have the same expression in Japanese too. For that as a mother I couldn't ignore this opportunity to help sort out some gender issues for the younger generation. I boldly remarked to my son and daughter, "Well, that is not good at all. We should use alternative forms of speaking, well, like 'Don't play like a cow or a donkey or something like that.'" Shantonu immediately responded, "Oh, that's not good either. It would be an insult to the cows." Manosi and I stood there looking at each other while Shantonu quickly disappeared from our sight. This happened in March 2007. Manosi was then in Class 7 and Shantonu in Class 10.

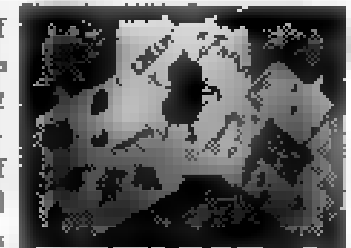
Gender implies difference, which is a natural phenomenon. But if some kind of unfair discrimination arises due to gender it can become a complex problem – what is known as a 'gender issue'. My Green sprout children may face several challenges related to this issue in the future – and I hope that they are able to perceive boys and girls, men and women as equals. I was glad to see that Green Sprout and Pea Sprout are very good friends and partners, who work together cooperatively.



"Hi! I'm Pea Sprout. I'm happy to be a member of Green Sprout." Check out *Children's Magazine*, page 110.

Green Sprout Promotes the Eco-bag

Here in West Bengal, the problem of waste disposal is becoming serious. It is disgusting to look at the increasing plastic waste materials such as micro-lin carry bags and other kinds of wrappers and packaging thrown all over the place. Mass-produced commodities are packaged in plastic have entered the markets rapidly, but people are reluctant to act responsibly, and start separating their household waste. It is said that 90% of the plastic used in India goes into packaging – all completely non-biodegradable waste.



Of all the eco-crafts designed by Green Sprout, the most popular one is surely the eco-bag – simple cloth bags we had got stitched by a local tailor, which the children then decorated with fabric paint. These cloth bags can easily be made special because everybody can personalise them with their own eco-designs. Green Sprout promoted the cloth bags as eco-bags that allow us to easily reduce our use of environmentally-damaging plastic carry bags. The cloth bags also reflected our love of traditional alternatives like leaf plates (disposable plates made by 'stitching' *Saal* leaves together), grocery bags made of old newspaper (known as *thunga* in Bengali), earthen cups (disposable terracotta cups used for tea or as containers for juicy sweets and curd) and banana leaves and lotus leaves, which are used to wrap up flower offerings to the gods. These materials have been used here in India for a long time – and all of them are natural. From an ecological viewpoint, when compared to plastic, these traditional materials are far more advanced – as they demonstrate wise-use of natural resources and promote the concept of recycling.

Making one's own cloth bag is like a personal contribution to the 4-Rs. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot (making compost by rotting organic waste). Green Sprout put its logo on the bags using a stamp and with stencils, but of course, free-hand drawing is also always enjoyable. Once again, we used markin cloth as it is quite inexpensive. You can make a cloth bag for

less than Rs 20. Green Sprout members introduced the cloth eco-bags to other groups and friends. It's not just an ordinary bag - it's a sign that we are earth-conscious citizens.



Have a look at examples of eco-bags and our message on page 19



Green Sprout Keeps Experimenting

Easy and Lazy for Green Sprout - Sheet mulch garden



You may be wondering what happened to the Young Bean Garden five or six years down the road from when it was first started. Many of our friends actually do ask us:

"How does your garden grow?"

"What are you growing these days?"

"Is your rooftop garden still growing strong?"

And Green Sprout members usually avoid such questions because, to be honest, our garden looks like a wild jungle. We answer, creatively.

"Well, yes, it is - um, you know, a lot like before. Hmm - yes. The garden. Well, which people say it is - looks a bit wild like a jungle, perhaps!"

We have allowed the weeds to dominate - am not physically able to dig soil with a hoe ever since my back started giving me a problem. The trees in the garden have become taller and as a result, the shaded spaces in the garden have considerably increased. This situation nudged me to opt for what is often known as lazy

gardening. I tried to make a sheet mulching bed with the children. This is a technique from *Permaculture*. Have you ever heard this word before? The concept was first developed in Australia by a man named Bill Mollison, and has since spread world-wide as a system of ecological agriculture. *Permaculture* aims to use land for organic food production through well designed zoning concepts and various other creative gardening techniques. The sheet mulching bed is also sometimes called a 'no-dig bed' because we can grow vegetables without ever digging up the soil. This method is also an interesting way to manage organic waste, because any type of organic material can be used for this.

In sheet mulching, you first cover the soil with layers of various kinds of organic matter. This cover protects the soil from erosion and weeds and works to maintain a balance of moisture and temperature. Anyone can do it even in a small space – all you need to do is collect that organic waste beforehand. Green Sprout made a very small sheet mulching bed and successfully grew French beans and turners.

Another lazy gardening method is to grow your seedlings in milk packets. This is much easier than making a nursery bed. Also, if you learn about layering and grafting, you can easily and quickly multiply most of your trees.

Generally speaking, people think that a well-weeded garden with no fallen leaves is the beautiful. They warn you that thieves and mice can enter the house if trees and bushes are growing wild around it. Our neighbours complain that the trees in our garden make their garden look 'dirty' because all the leaves, blown by the wind, end up on their side. One day, my husband had to comment, 'We can't ask the trees to stop shedding their leaves, can we?' They also complained that we were breeding mosquitoes in our *jungle/jungle* garden! At first, I thought it was funny that they were using the word, 'jungle' to describe our small patch of a garden, but I later came to know that *jungle* in Bengali is a word used to describe any wild and bushy situation.

Since then, our garden has always been called a *jungle*. People might think that we do not care about our garden at all. It is true that we don't have to do much for it. However, if you compare our garden to our neighbour's garden from the roof, you will be able to notice the difference clearly. The 'beautiful' gar-

den next door, which is swept and weeded daily, has many patches of exposed soil that are bleached white by the sun, and are cracking. On the other hand, the Young Bean Garden is covered with fallen leaves and weeds, and the soil is blackish in colour. If you walk through the garden, you will soon understand that our soil is soft and gentle to the touch. We just have to pull our seeds under these fallen leaves, and they start to grow naturally. Sweet basil, tomato, New Zealand spinach (Tatsumi), Winged bean, etc. they all grow well in this garden. Star fruit and curry leaf plants have been growing here for a long time. The butterflies and birds seem to prefer this garden too, though wasps have been a problem at times.

Our garden and its soil are both self-sustaining. So

"What has happened to the Young Bean garden then?"

"It is a perfect jungle – by choice!"

After ten years, we can now answer this question with total confidence.



Try your own sheet mulching bed. How to make one is shown on page 46.

Green Sprout Harbours a Tree

There was a tree just beside the entrance gate to our house (the one our neighbour complained about for its falling leaves). We did not know what kind of tree it was when it was there before we moved into this house. At that time, the tree was about 5 meters tall, slender, with very bright green leaves. It grew very quickly, and within three or four years, its trunk grew to around 30 centimetres in diameter and its branches were spreading out with pride. In summer, its green leaves provided us with nice shade, while in the winter, it looked bare after shedding all its leaves. In spring, it was covered in new green leaves. The tree would bear fruits that were small and green, and though people could not eat these, the birds really seemed



to enjoy them. The flowers were very small and not easily visible. My husband guessed that this tree might have originated from the hill areas of north Bengal. Our neighbours said to us, "Why don't you cut that tree down? Its useless, and its leaves are such a nuisance to us. You cannot sell the fruit – you cannot sell the timber." Our neighbours were never quite able to appreciate the true value of this tree. We kept ignoring their complaints.

As you probably know, trees grow very quickly in hot countries. This tree was a good example, as it seemed amazingly bigger especially after the rainy season. Soon, however, the tree did become too big for our garden. Its roots started to spread out, and before long, the bricks of the boundary wall were cracking and breaking off. Also, perhaps due to the age of the tree, insects attacked it along with the continuous attacks from our neighbours. In Winter 2006, we finally decided to cut the tree. Shantonu was extremely disappointed by this decision, explaining that the tree was a kind of landmark for him when he was returning home from school in the hot season. When he saw the top of it from a distance, he felt a soothing feeling. Moreover, there was a canopy of langurs that often came to this tree seeking its cool shade, and we saw various bird species loved it too.

But we knew we had to do what we had to do. The people we had appointed to cut down the tree, a father-and-son duo, started by cutting the branches off first. The trunk was too tall to cut at one time, so they cut the main trunk into three portions. After nearly three hours, the tree had been completely removed and the space it occupied felt so empty. I comforted Shantonu, "Let's think of it in a different way, that we harvested a tree – not cut it down. We can still use this tree in other ways. The tree is still with us. Don't worry." We kept some parts of the trunk standing in the entrance path, and they looked like an object after the children put various coloured marbles into the nooks – poured a little bit of Japanese rice wine on the stump to celebrate the tree's spirit. Though I couldn't actually remember why people in Japan do this traditionally, I guess big trees that have seen many years are thought to have a certain spirit within them. The spirit of both

plants and people must be celebrated when they depart, and return to the air and earth.

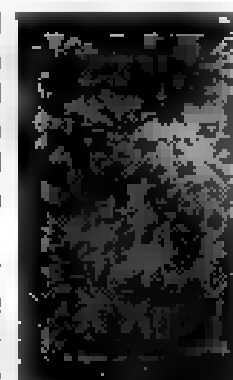
This is the story of how we 'harvested' a tree from our Young Bean Garden.



For information on multi-purpose trees for home gardens, see page 75

Green Sprout Goes Out and About - Collecting information

Besides observation, talking to people is another good way of collecting information. Many of the children who belong to the Eco-group Network have conducted interviews with people in their local communities as a means of collecting information on various natural resources. Though Green Sprout did not conduct such interviews, we were also able to gather useful and interesting information from people around us. For example, we learned which medicinal plant is effective for injuries children get when playing, or that applying mustard oil on the body and inside the ears before swimming will protect the skin and prevent colds.



There are various ways of doing interviews. Preparing an interview sheet beforehand is a good idea, but simply remembering to ask people 'What' and 'Why' questions will also help you glean interesting bits of information. Suppose you are collecting information on trees. You can just ask people, "What tree do you like the most?" And follow this up with, "Why do you like that tree so much?" People usually want to plant their favourite trees, and are more familiar with trees that are commonly observed nearby. So, when you compile the results provided by simple questions like these as a field survey, you may get some interesting information about local natural resources.

Green Sprout was not able to reach such a conclusion, but Shantonu and Mianosi did actually conduct occasional interviews when they visited the NGO where I work. As I mentioned before, there is no one at home to look after the children, so I sometimes had to bring them along with me to work. This was especially true when they were still small (up to around Classes 5 and 6).

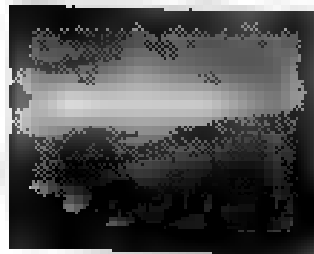
Earlier than just sitting around waiting for me to finish my work, I often encouraged the two of them to go around and ask simple questions to some of the office staff. Most of the staff's duty was compensated by answering their questions, and alleviating the children's boredom. It is not clear that they needed to be careful about not disturbing the work of the people they were interviewing.

The results of this office survey appeared in *Children's Magazine* and were shared with those people who answered their questions.

So now, I am just dying to ask you, "What is your favourite insect? And why?"

See interviews about Ticks and 'lice' in *Where's Magazine* page 33 & page 34

Green Sprout and Hindu Gods - A part of local resources



Although I have somehow come to understand that life here revolves around various Hindu festivals and ceremonies, I must admit that during the first two to three years, I was unable to keep track of each occasion. You'd often find me exclaiming something like, "What? ANOTHER school holiday? What festival is it this time?"

In addition to all the celebrations for the many Hindu gods, people celebrate Muslim and Christian festivals with equal ardour. This all adds up to a lot of days off – and I wasn't always sure what would happen on those particular days. Since my husband is perpetually at work and is not strict about religion, I relied on neighbours and relatives in Kowloon to remind me about these events – simple things like when and how to celebrate which festivals.

I was not easy to tackle Hindu gods and goddesses who are known to change into a number of different incarnations. Though I still do not fully understand Hindu mythology, some of the gods and goddesses and their stories have become more recognisable to me through my experiences over the last ten years. Green

Sprout members felt that Hindu gods are a kind of 'local resource' because they reflect the seasons, food habits, and the way of life here.

Among the various Hindu gods, our family's favourite has always been Ganesha. There is no particular reason, but we like him. As you know, Ganesha has an elephant head and a pot-bellied human body. Shantou and Manosi's father has a paunch similar to Ganesha's, the main difference being that the 'diverse' is held in Ganesha's belly. Big difference! Lord Ganesha is also said to have very good penmanship, and likes a sweet called *laddu*. He even rides on a tiny mouse. When he was small, he was called Ganapati. It looks very cute when Ganapati tucks a flower behind his ear – he has a keen sense of fashion! He is more like a guardian than a god for us.

In India, different gods are popular in different regions. Let us see what kinds of gods appear on the stage here in West Bengal.

In December and January, people often enjoy the short period of cool, pleasant weather known as 'winter' by going out for picnics; so most Hindu gods take a back seat during this time. During this colder season, people shrink into their shawls and tend to become less active, it might be same for the gods.

Early in February, when the smell of spring is in the air and people start to relax more in the warm weather, goddess Saraswati is worshipped on the fifth day after the new moon. Saraswati is the goddess of learning and art. On that day, we celebrate in our home by placing a small idol of Saraswati in front of the Ganesha image. Each family member places a book and a pen in front of her and presents her with a *poo* offering. Children pray to Saraswati, asking her to bless them with good learning in the coming year. Interestingly enough, children (not adults) are not allowed to read any books on this day. On the day following Saraswati Puja, we eat something called *gata shuddho* (*gata* means 'wholesome' or 'together' and *shuddho* means 'boiled' in Bengali), which is prepared the previous night. The reason for this is that custom states that we are not allowed to use cooking fire on that day until the sun sets. The reason for this is not clear, but custom is custom. *Gata shuddho* is prepared by boiling together various pulses and newly harvested vegetables such as potato, sweet potato, tomato,

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eggplant, brinjal, bean and peas – all uncut and unpeeled). These boiled vegetables are washed up together and a little bit of mustard oil and salt is mixed into them before eating. This preparation is good for health and is eaten as a celebration of Spring. Once this *poya* is over, the temperature seems to rise rapidly and we enter a hot Indian summer season. We pray to Lord Shiva about ten days after *Saumati Poya*, on a festival known as *Shivratri* – or the night of Shiva.

Again in spring, this time on the first full-moon day of March, we celebrate the festival of Holi (or *Dah*). Children enjoy this festival with their friends by running around, pouring, spraying, smearing and dousing each other in coloured water and powder – they look like they are mad. I am not too eager to take part in this festival partly because the colours used are no longer natural colours, as they once were. But anyway, regardless of how toxic the colours are, Holi is celebrated without fail once a year, and kids seem to have a ball. The Bengali New Year then starts from the middle of April. Local grocery shops invite customers in and distribute sweets and newly printed Bengali calendars. Customers need to close up their arrears or balances with the shops before the new year begins.

Till early June, the weather is humid and hot and it is simply too hot to organize anything – let alone any kind of festival or *poya*. I'm sure the gods and goddesses must also feel the same.

Rainy season starts from mid-June, bringing some much-needed relief from the heat. Jagannath Puja is celebrated in July. Jagannath is considered to be the lord of the Universe and always appears as a trio, with brother Balram and sister Subhadra. For this festival, a big chariot is pulled all the way from the new town, closing off the road to Chandernagore on the day of its coming and again one week later, when the big chariot leaves. It is nice to see small children too, pulling on the street little models of the wooden chariot that carries Lord Jagannath. Various flowers, ornaments and fruit tree seedlings are sold on the roadside, reminding us that it is a good season to start gardening, if one has not already started.

When the monsoon begins to abate in the latter part of August, we have the Rakhi festival in which sisters tie rakhi on

strings on the wrists of their brothers to protect them. Brothers usually include cousin-brothers and close family friends too. Eight days after Rakhi, there is a celebration for Lord Krishna's birth so schools again have a holiday on that day!

Gradually, the cloudy skies get clearer and clearer, a sure sign that the rainy season is on its way out. From the end of August to the beginning of September, children, and even adults, fly kites. This is the time of year that the *Vishwakarma Puja* takes place. Vishwakarma is the god of tools, houses and tools, and therefore cycle-riders, pullers, bus drivers, carpenters, and small-scale farmers, in particular, celebrate this *poya*. But at the domestic level, as a show of respect to Vishwakarma, people clean all kinds of domestic metal and electronic items and appliances. Shakti and Manon make the effort to clean their bicycles and offer flowers on that day, and they say a prayer. This *poya* reminds us that gods exist in each and every thing, and that we need to take care of the items we use, which give service to us. This kind of wise-use attitude can contribute to reduction of waste, and in this context, I think Vishwakarma makes a contribution to eco-life, too.

As we enter the month of October, the real major *poya* season starts. Most people throughout Bengal are already in holiday mode. Durga Puja, the biggest festival of all in this region, is celebrated for a total of ten days in October. Goddess Durga is called *Ma Durga*, which means Mother goddess. It is said that during this *poya*, *Ma Durga* returns to her parental home – *Parthi* from the home of her husband at the top of the Himalayas (Heaven). During this season, married women, especially young ones, return to the home of their parents and are pampered by their families. In preparation for Durga Puja, people become busy shopping for new clothes and shoes. It is customary for people to celebrate *Ma Durga* by getting dressed up in their new clothes. I think this is a smart way to control overconsumption because people here tend to refrain from a lot of buying during other seasons. For people in the so-called developed countries, like Japan, shopping has actually become a form of recreation. People tend to buy a lot of unnecessary things, all the while blaming themselves for 'over-consumption' but making little effort to control the shopping urge.

A few weeks after Durga Puja comes Lakshmi Puja, Kali Puja and Diwali – one after the other into the month of November. Lakshmi is the goddess of prosperity and Kali is a dark goddess with a very uniquely scary look about her. On the night before Diwali, people light fourteen candles in their home and they eat fourteen different types of green leaves, *shadla aag*, or at least they are supposed to. Nowadays, people do not know exactly which fourteen green leaves they are prescribed to eat so they get a small bunch of various leafy vegetables from a vegetable seller. Since most of these leaves are known to have high nutritional and/or medicinal values, this must have been a traditional way for staying healthy. The night of Diwali is very beautiful, with all of the houses decorated with candles and small lights, and people also enjoy fireworks. About three days after Diwali, we celebrate *Shak Phonta*. On this day, sisters apply a *phonta* (sandalwood mark) on the forehead of their *shas* (brothers) to protect them. Manon complains that most of the celebrations are for boys. Agreeing somewhat, I have explained to her that girls have mystical powers so boys need to ask for protection from the girls.

A quick look around will show you that there are many Hindu gods and goddesses existing among us here. Even in a sleepy town like Chaudh, people petition the part in various celebrations and festivals to welcome each god and goddess. It is very heartening to see people here treat gods and goddesses like their own relatives! At most of the small Kali and Shakti shrines located along the roadides, people offer prayers every day. In winter, they are kept warm, covered up in shawls, just like us, and surprisingly, some small shrines have ceiling fans to keep the idol cool in summer! Hindu gods and goddesses belong to the people, and each one has a distinctive figure and character. That is why they are especially popular among children. Green Sprout visited many of these gods and goddesses for guest appearances in *Children's Magazine*. They look so happy to be close to us and we are happy to have such rich resources surrounding us.



Do you know that gods and goddesses even play sports? See *Children's Magazine* pages 195 & 200. Also see page 112 on how we learned to make a *gopuram*.



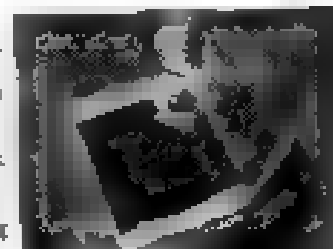
From the Ganapati Bookshelf: Hindu Gods and Goddesses . . .



If you think that Hindu mythology is not interesting, try *The Hindu God, Stories of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses* (from Krishnamurti, published by Rupa . . .) It tells you about Ganesha and various other Hindu gods and goddesses in a simple and interesting way. You can learn more about Ganesha's birth, and how Ganesha and Muruga often fight over Muruga, who Ganesha has an elephant head, why he has a broken tusk, why he remained single, why he has a very small . . .

Green Sprout Keeps Trying Out Handmade solar cooker

We have plenty of sunlight here in India, often too much, and using a solar cooker is an interesting way to make use of it. I have been trying a manufactured box-type solar cooker at home. If you set your rice and the *dal* (curries) in the solar cooker in the morning, they will be ready by lunch time. The only tricky part is that you must adjust the cooker if the sun is not working in the sun's position, you are then solar cooking efficiently – it also saves time and energy. It is almost magical, a fact I have a personal wish for this simple solar cooking technology to spread throughout the rural areas where people are dependent upon firewood and organic fuels for cooking. It is a suitable way for people in rural areas to save much effort and time spent collecting fuel sources. But unfortunately, solar cookers are not popular here. There are numerous reasons for this: the preferred cooking style here is frying, not boiling, because a solar cooker costs more than a bicycle, a solar cooker is, moreover, too heavy to be carried, and of course, a solar cooker is less efficient (or unsuitable) for indoor use, or on cloudy, monsoon days.



It is quite easy to make your own solar cooker. After learning about the principles behind solar cooking at an eco-

work camp, Green Sprout tried it out. Besides my children one of Shanmou's friends also lent a hand and soon this trio was hard at work. Apparently if they were successful, they were concocting a plan to sell their solar cookers to neighbours with the guarantee that they would minimise the use of LP gas. They started out by searching for a suitable design on the Internet, and soon came up with the Minimum Solar Cooker that basically consists of two cardboard boxes and some aluminium foil. After collecting the required materials, as well as making their own glue by boiling flour with water (I was impressed by this move to cut down on expenses), the solar box was soon made. When I looked at the solar cooker the following day, however, it had been vandalised by rats! They had gone for the white flour glue, tearing the box apart completely in the process. Their experiment it would seem, had failed. It was bad luck for the children, but we can only laugh about and be impressed by the courageous rat and its hearty appetite! We later came to know that a little copper sulphate mixed in with the flour glue would prevent such attacks by rats and insects.

To make matters worse, both Shanmou and Manon contracted jaundice soon after a further disruption for this project. But even with these disruptions, they continued with their solar cooker experiments for the next year or so. Though their handmade solar cooker looked like an ordinary cardboard box at a glance, this box could somehow cook food! Of course the cooking time using their box was longer than that of the manufactured cooker but the children were able to cook rice (sometimes it came out a bit under-cooked) and boil potatoes (sometimes a bit hard, so I added them to other dishes after a bit more cooking) for our lunch.

As a parent I feel that watching children try hard at something and persevere at it is priceless. I would never discourage them by commenting on the situation like "It's nearly 40 degrees outside, so rice and potatoes can be cooked naturally even without a solar cooker" unless the children themselves figured it out (which they did). I refrained from complaining about the mess in the room, with various

construction materials for the solar cooker all scattered about at least until they were finished working because it was difficult to distinguish by myself which bits were waste and which bits were still needed.

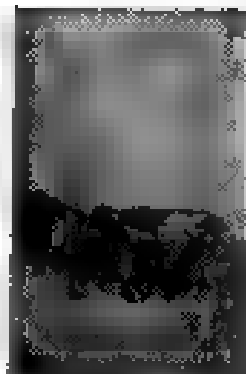
One day, during lunch time as we were eating our slightly undercooked rice (prepared by the Minimum Solar Cooker) the Green Sprout adviser told us about an alternative idea he had in his head: "How about putting rice and water into a black-coloured container and keeping it inside a plastic packet, sealed tightly to prevent air from escaping and just leave it on the roof." His suggestion sounded like a joke to me, but the children did not take it lightly. They nodded seriously to declare that the idea might be worth experimenting with. Their enthusiasm made me believe the idea might be a possibility though we never did actually try this one out.

When Shanmou entered Class 10, he made a new-and-improved version of the Minimum Solar Cooker for his school science project. Generally, students in Class 10 are busy with their studies, as they diligently prepare for their board examinations. Most of the students would not put much effort into this kind of time-consuming science project. Shanmou told me that very few students in the whole school actually participated in this science exhibition. Among the few projects that were contributed, most of the teachers did not seem very impressed by the Minimum Solar Cooker which looked like an ordinary cardboard box. They were surely expecting much more sophisticated items for the big science show. Couldn't I help but notice that Shanmou looked a bit disappointed. But he was alright. I was not in the least upset or shocked by the attitude of the teachers at school. I had grown used to this after ten years of the same thing. Green Sprout understands the potential this box has and we did not bother our heads about the responses of others, including the teachers. So we just keep on experimenting, without any regard for what is praiseworthy; and I will tell you, the sun shines on us most of the time.



Green Sprout and Language Tips on resource management

As Manon was entering Class 1 in primary school, I heaved a great sigh upon realising that literacy does not start from age 6 (Class 1) here but much earlier from nursery school. Though my husband and I feel that this focus on literacy at such an early age is not necessary and may sometimes even be detrimental to the development of a child, we had to adjust to this system. My husband made various kinds of flashcards on both English and Bengali for our children. At first, they both had a bit of a struggle at school, since neither Shantonu nor Manon had learned their ABC's beforehand.



For example, once Manon, a fresh primary school pupil in Class 1 (one who did not know her ABC's yet, mind you), brought home her English homework on converting nouns into adjectives. Though I could easily guess that my daughter did not understand this homework, I needed to encourage her to finish it.

"Look, it's wind, windy, cloud, cloudy, rain, rainy. If you add 'y' after each word, it becomes a descriptive word. When the word blows, the situation is called 'windy'. You know. Many clouds and then the sky looks cloudy."

I explained it to her by drawing pictures and acting out each word with great gusto. Manon seemed to understand and started doing the homework by herself, and I resumed my cooking. After a while, Manon declared that she had finished her homework. I went to her and looked at her notebook. Her giant letters written in pencil, were like a work of art unto themselves. I started checking the words one by one.

"Hmm...!" I was suddenly astonished, impressed, pleased when I saw, *ice—ice cream*.

I burst out laughing, now understanding why she had asked me for the spelling of 'cream' earlier when I was cooking. For her, a situation that would be described as having 'lots of ice' was 'ice cream'. I thought back to a few weeks ago when we were eating out at a restaurant and Manon had to wait out since she had a minor cold. Grammatically, her work was not done correctly, but

I really wished that the adjective form of 'ice' could actually be 'ice cream' because I didn't like to block her imagination.

I think anybody who has ever started to learn a new language has had this kind of experience. Children, of course, seem to pick up languages much faster than adults. My children became better than me in English and Bengali by the time they reached Classes 5 and 6. Learning a new language is certainly a tough task, but if you learn more languages, you will find that you encounter a wider range of interesting experiences. People here speak more than two or three languages. This is a fact that reflects the diversity of India, where each state has a different language. In a situation like this, language is not merely a subject to learn in school, but a tool required for every day life. We need to be able to communicate with others, even if our pronunciation is a bit strange or our grammar is not exactly perfect.

Like any other kind of tool we might utilize, language skills must also get polished and maintained through constant practice. The more we use a language, the more familiar it becomes to us. Think of it: this was my children learned Bengali as a subject in school, but they polished it mainly by hanging out with friends in the neighbourhood. Fortunately or unfortunately, because we use Japanese at home, my progress in Bengali was very slow. In any case, it was gradually polished by listening to other people's conversations on the trains and at the office. At times, I was deeply impressed with new words and sentences encountered. For instance it was interesting for me to discover that many plants and animals are used figuratively in Bengali.

Once as I was standing in a long queue to pay the water tax bill, I overheard an anguished gentleman say, "Oof! They make the humans stand here meaningless like *shogol gusol*!" There is an indigenous fish called *kol machh* (*climbing perch*), which is said to be so strong it can survive even if it is deep-fried in hot oil. So, some people say that, "girls are as strong as *kol machh*!" A terribly messy situation is described as "*gobor* (cow dung) stuck to a cow's tail!" These expressions are used to help state things in a clearer way – and definitely make the meaning more vivid. They can also help to cultivate an interest in the surrounding animals and plants being used in a figurative way.

With this thought in mind, Green Sprout loves looking into languages – and discovering how language is so closely connected to people and natural resources in our locality. Once you grasp hold of a new expression, you have got to try using it. So next time you are just standing there waiting in a long line (an experience you will have plenty of here) try saying in Bengali,

“ *Hawa khacole* (Yeah, I am just eating air) ”

You will really feel that you belong in this society and any irritation you may have will soon be eased. Like any other natural resource, language also needs to be used effectively to bring about a positive result.



See also examples on page 128



Green Sprout on a New Journey

Green Sprout Tries Ecological Thinking



Many people think of Japan as one of the world's richest and most advanced countries. When we first shifted here, people who came to know that I was from Japan expressed their praise for Japan with words they knew: Honda! Toyota! Suzuki! They then continued with their point saying, “on the other hand, our India is still not developed, it is still poor.” I usually replied, “Well, Japan has its own difficulties and problems too. I think you will find that the situation here is actually not as good as you might think.”

We often encounter newspaper reports about strange incidents taking place in Japan, and many Japanese visitors and friends express their concern about their mother country. For example, one serious social problem that has swept the nation is the number of school-refusers – children who don't want to go to school – has been steadily increasing in Japan. We wondered how this could be when Japan has such good school facilities and education is totally free up to Class 9. The main reason appears to be that bullying amongst children has become more and more serious.

We rarely hear these kinds of reports about Japan here in India. In the case of my children, however, though they don't have much fun in class, they go to school everyday without much complaint. My children actually seem to like their schools etc.

think they have a lot of fun with their friends there despite the excess of examinations. So what is the difference between Japan and India? Shantonu reflected on this and commented that though there are too many students in his school with 50 children in his own class, if they all cooperate with each other, they somehow manage quite well. No doubt, fights sometimes break out, but there doesn't seem to be any deep seated ill-treatment or tormenting going on among the children.

Shantonu used the word 'many', which I suppose also implies 'various'. There are diverse types of schools here in India, some run by the government, others by missionaries, private institutions, NGOs, or even individuals. There are expensive schools, quite affordable schools, and schools that are free of cost. Some schools have air-conditioned classrooms, while some schools have outdoor classrooms under trees. Every day, a wide variety of children spend time together in one classroom: Sikh boys, Muslim boys, boys of Chinese origin, boys from other Indian states, and even half-Japanese half-Indian boys, like my son. This diversity is seen not only in schools, but in the community here too. Though Chandernagore is not a village, but a well-maintained suburb, some children here start working in shops just after finishing their Class 4 or 5 studies. Some children start their own businesses when they finish Class 11 or 12. They might have financial constraints, but nobody in the community minds, or looks down on them. I feel that people here fully recognize that each and every person is different and faces different situations, so people have a high tolerance level for differences and diversity.

It is widely recognised that this diversity is a key component of Indian culture. Interestingly diversity is also a vital factor in ecology. Ecology is the study of the relationships between living and non-living things in our surroundings. We can learn to respect each element and each relationship by studying ecology. The concepts that 'everything is connected' and 'everything has a function and value' are the basic principles that ecology teaches us. It also teaches us that the more diversity present in any ecosystem, the more balanced it is. Maybe, more diversified societies and communities are also more balanced? The classrooms of India certainly have more diversity than those of Japan.

Like this, ecological thinking can be applied to our day-to-day living experiences on a much wider canvas, and could actually provide us with refreshingly positive views for creating approaches to 'sustainable development' in our societies as well. You may think this is all a bit too difficult to achieve, or even unnecessary. But, I feel that as global citizens, reducing the various burdens on our living planet is one of our main duties. Put quite simply, we cannot use up all the Earth's natural resources for our own generation. Sustainable development is based on everybody's daily life – and life style – the way we live and what we consume. So all of us, both children and adults, need to take responsibility. don't we?

How can we contribute towards an environmentally friendly and sustainable society? Let me share some ideas my children and I have embraced after attending the NGO workshops my husband organized over the years. Referring back to these points from time to time may be helpful to you too – as you develop your own personal model of global citizenship.

Sustainable Development Principles Reflecting an Ecological Viewpoint:

- *Every component has multiple uses/functions*

This principle can be applied to

- Recycling and reusing.
- Gardening with plants that have various uses.
- Recognizing the multiple roles of each person. Children themselves have various roles. Encourage each child to think and act as a family member, local community member, producer of food through gardening, young citizen, etc.

- *Every function should be served by more than one element*

This principle helps us build more balanced structures that have the capacity to survive. It means that even when one element is not functioning properly another element will take up the task and function in its place. For example, if you grow various types of vegetables, rather than just one or two, your garden will be much more ecologically balanced and resistant to insect attacks.

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If you are seeking some information, you had better collect from various sources, rather than just one or two, so you can formulate a balanced opinion on the subject.

- The moderating effect

This principle is also known as the 'edge effect', and is adopted from *Amma culture*. The meeting point of different ecosystems is the richest in biodiversity. For example, the edge of a pond is the meeting point for the water body and the land, so a wide range of life forms exist right there. In a similar way, meeting people from different cultures and backgrounds is a enriching experience. Bringing about an enriching social 'edge effect'.

- Use of secondary research

We all know that there are limits to the amount of fossil energy available. It is our duty as global citizens to use energy sources carefully, and to conserve wherever possible. We also need to maximise the generation and use of alternative and renewable energy sources such as the sun, the wind, water streams, animal power and plants. An over-mechanized system which consumes the limited fossil energy available may not always be more advanced, but rather it may be backward – when we think in terms of energy conservation. So we shouldn't think we are more developed just because machines are doing all the work for us. Alternative technologies or appropriate technologies, are as important and valuable as advanced technologies.

■ **Investment** – The amount of money that is invested in the project.

Instead of forcibly changing a situation, try finding out what the maximum possibilities within it are. This can be one way to solve problems. I mean to say that you need to think of the so-called difficulties/obstacles/problems as your resources. For example, you can get a lot of information from the weeds in your garden. They shouldn't just be considered as obstacles. In fact, weeds will tell you the kind of soil your garden has, what vegetables can be grown there without too many insect problems, etc. If, in

Another context, you find them in something on a personal level which you cannot do or manage right now, it may mean that you have the potential to do it or manage it later in the future. Let's try thinking in terms of *what can be*, beyond *what is*.

From the General Practitioner

Values for living and thinking: ecological and creative

After having read *A Children's Book House* (by Carolyn Noland, FFL Books), you will be eager to start a garden at your home or in your school yard. With extensive illustrations, this book provides many ideas for activities to learn creatively and ecologically through interactive garden projects for both children and adults.

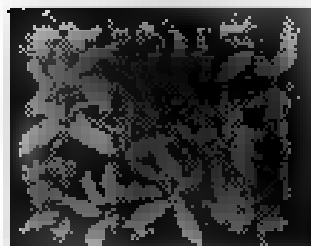
The one page of the *Ways of the World* in *Rational Answers* published by The India Press is valued because there are few real life books more than 10 years. Author Rafe Jones writes, and when he finished it last 10 he took a one year leave from school and was not so successful in most experts on science, technology, and enough of agriculture. He presents one unique idea on the condition that he wrote his diary every day during his period. A one-year leave from a formal education system may not seem unusual outside a surprise on the Indian hand, more than ever before parents like Rafe's feel that children cannot really find an answer to learning in the present formal school system. This book is a good example of an alternative Rafe's second book. The story of the *Ways of the World* begins by a young Rafe's father from his perspective of how school was not enough about making along with books and so on.

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If the number of school-refusers keeps increasing, then perhaps the school system itself has some problem, not the children. To re-evaluate and improve the system, thinking ecologically may be one way of solving this problem. It is not only adults who are able to contribute to ecological thinking, but children as well. There are many examples where ideas that came from children have eventually created new products or solved social problems.

One more important thing to always keep in mind is that thinking is a skill that we can acquire and improve upon through practice and training, just like any other skill! This is what Edward De Bono says, and he goes on to add that if we practice thinking using various techniques, anybody can learn to think creatively. Doesn't this sound good to you? When I proposed establishing a Thinking Club in our home, my children rejected the idea immediately, thinking that I would create more confusion. "We have enough chaos already," they said. Laughing, one of my friends told me that I should go ahead with the idea because, after all, the main work of any mother is to create stimulating chaos for her children! In the end, we never started our Thinking Club, but Green Sprout members try to keep these tips for thinking ecologically and creatively in the corners of our minds. These concepts might be helpful for all of us when we are in the midst of the chaos of daily life here, really just one tiny corner of the earth.

Green Sprout Sets Off on a New Journey



As I write this, it will soon be April 2007 – spring!

It's time for a new start!

I think our home-based eco-activities are nearing the conclusion of one chapter of our lives. Perhaps it's just another chapter, but I feel my teenagers have their own interests and directions now. After completing Class 10, Shantonu will soon leave to study ecological agriculture at a high school in Japan. Manom will be in Class 8. She loves pop and rock music very much. Our garden, once fondly known as Young Bean Garden, has taken on a very wild look, with tall jungley trees. The seed pods of the *Bahutia* break open and spread their seeds, making a sound like small pebbles falling on the ground.

The children's father is busy as usual, and is away from the house most of the time. Thanks to Green Sprout, I am able to manage working from home. The number of people who work from their homes is increasing nowadays. Certainly, this working style is time-effective as you can manage your domestic work along with your job, and do not have to commute daily.

Looking back on the last ten years of my life, I would have to say that taking care of small children (ages 4-9) was thoroughly exhausting and required a lot of patience. Yes, I sometimes felt that going into an office was much easier than working from home. After all, in an office, you can work at a bit stretch. But at home, you need to learn to utilize small snippets of time and work in sprints. Working at home is also rather lonely. Home-based eco-activities helped me turn both of those two 'problems' into something positive. Through Green Sprout, I came to see my children as my assistants, supporters, partners, and even as reliable colleagues. I was so often encouraged by the children, and Green Sprout brought many funny experiences our way, many of which have turned into family stories.

So, "What will happen to Green Sprout?" I asked my children, sentimentally. They looked at me as if the answer was obvious. Their reply:

"You don't know? That is so simple. Green Sprout is a plant. It germinates from a tiny seed, then grows and becomes a mature plant and creates new seeds."

"Oh, yes, yes. You are so right."

Listening to their words, I put aside my sentiments as a mother who has watched her children grow up so quickly right in front of her eyes, and found a deep sense of encouragement. I had now gained two devoted colleagues, my own children.

Yes, Green Sprout is a bean and a sprout. As it is a plant, it spreads its roots throughout the soil – and grows – and makes new beans. These Green Sprout beans can be cooked as food or sown again as seeds. My children will sow their seeds wherever they are. You can sow your seed wherever you are. Green Sprout is certainly a bean, but also a spirit – a courageous, curious,

lovely spirit. The journey of Green Sprout continues, and will reincarnate itself in different names and forms. And Green Sprout might even drop in as a guest at your house. If so, please do say "Hello!" to your Green Sprout from us.



"See you later!"

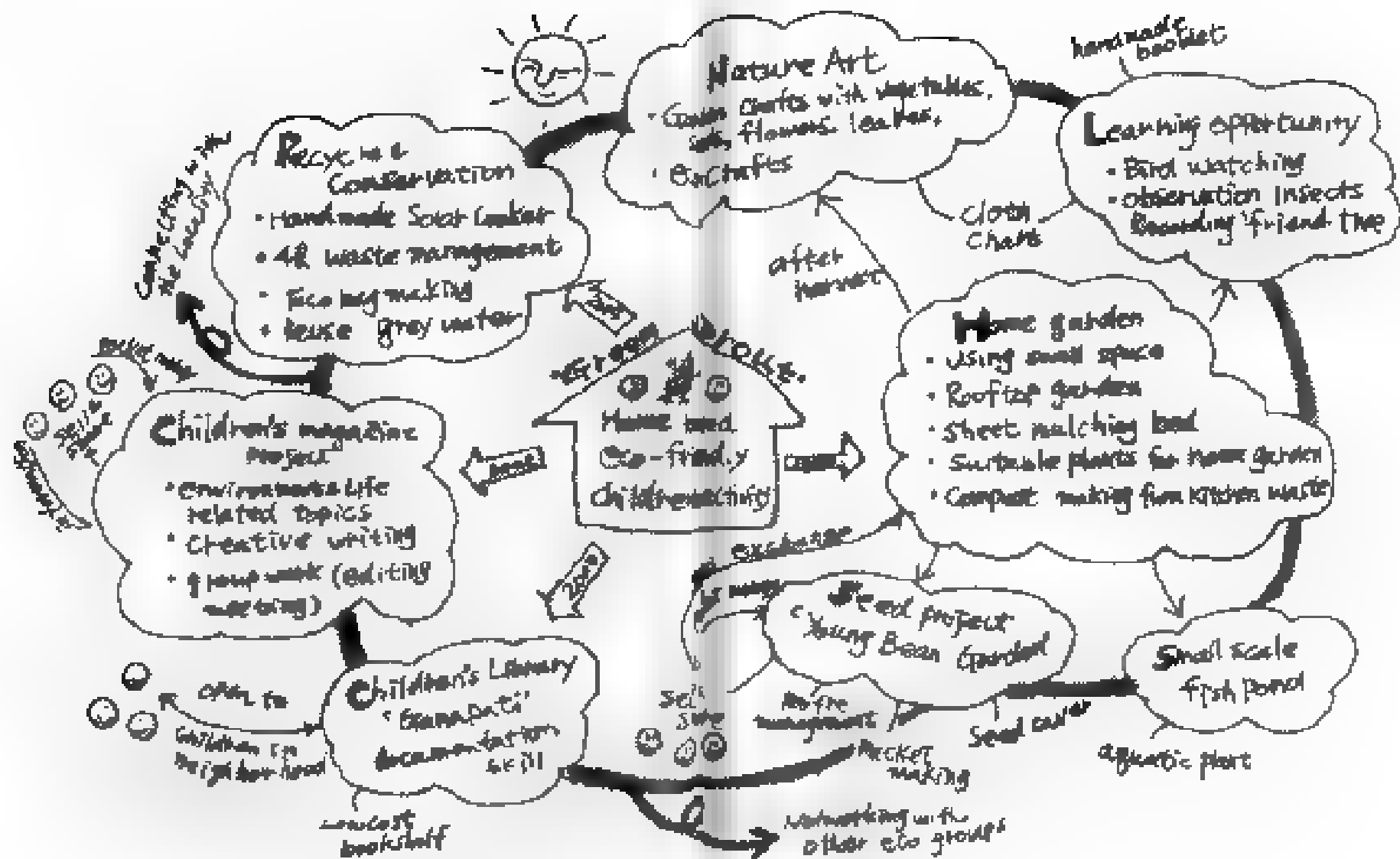


PART II

Harvesting Ideas

– Activities of Green Sprout –





Gardening



The Home Garden

Based on our Young Bean Cack and Green Sprout experiences, I would identify the more important aspects of home gardening with children to be:

It can involve our children as food producers and encourage them to maintain the garden. Children are often more capable than we expect them to be. Even a small harvest from the garden brings joy and we don't focus too much on the nutritional aspect at first. Gardening work and various garden-based activities provide opportunities for fun and learning among adults and parents.

Points for success:

Start on a small scale so that you and your children can manage it.

Introduce new techniques one by one, and try them out. Don't try to do everything at once.

- Don't be afraid of failure and don't be disappointed at your own mistakes. It is all just part of the process, and you can always try again!

Even if you do not have a garden space, gardening with children is possible using pots placed on a veranda or on window ledges.

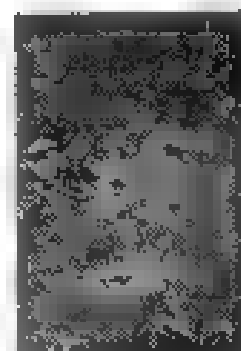
Use your imagination and creative skills to suit your own garden and be sure to enjoy yourself!



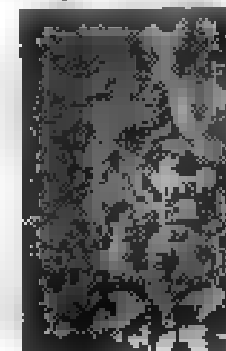
Magical magic in the garden

From a practical point of view, I suggest you first carefully observe and analyse your garden site before starting. Make a blueprint of the garden design to which you refer. Questions you may ask beforehand are:

- What kind of soil do I have?
- Where is my water source? How much water is available on a daily basis?
- In what direction does sunlight move about the garden space?
- Are there any shade places in the plot?
- At which direction does the slope go down and exit points of water?
- What kind of trees already exist in the site and its surroundings?
- Does the site need protection from the wind?



Starting from a small space



Plant various types of plants together. Grow vegetables, herbs



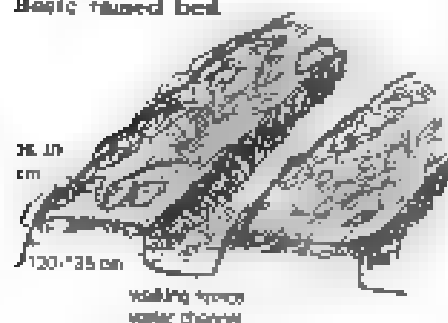
Even a small backyard can become a magical fun garden

Preparing a Vegetable Bed

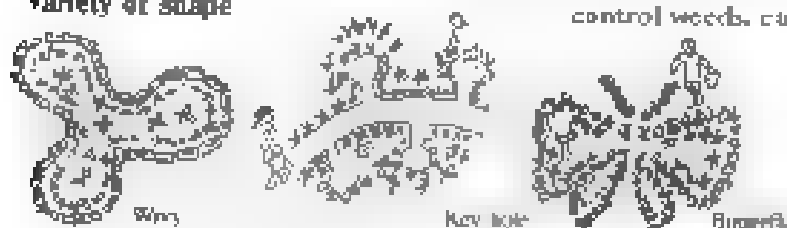
Any vegetable garden needs to have a space for cultivating (the bed) and some other space for walking (a pathway) so that you never end up having to walk on the vegetable bed itself. You can try various types of vegetable beds, while remembering that the shape of the bed does not necessarily have to be square or rectangular. In small-scale gardens, wavy edges are often used to increase the available planting area. Children tend to enjoy this style more as well.

Sprinkle the area you have designated to be your vegetable bed with water one day before your work begins to make digging a bit easier.

Basic raised bed



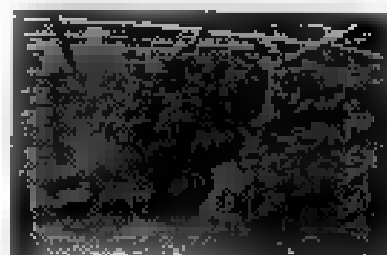
Variety of shape



Increase vertical space

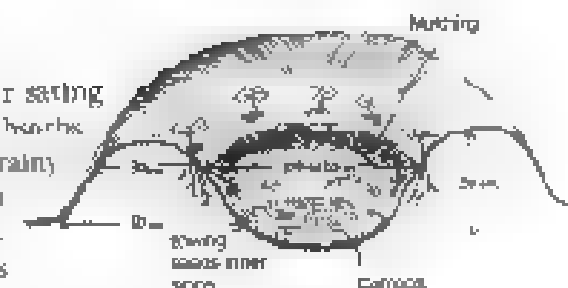
Mulching is to cover the soil surface with 0-15 cm or more of organic material such as dry green grass, tree leaves, etc. in order to

- add plant nutrient
- buffer soil temperatures
- prevent erosion
- promote soil life
- control weeds, etc.



Circle Garden

A circle bed is useful for saving space and water; it also absorbs extra water during the rainy season. The diameter of a circle bed should be 1 m. In the case of several beds being set up together, the distance between the centres of each circle bed should be 2 m.



How to make a circle bed

You need 1 spade, 2 sacks and a rope about 0.8 m.

1. Remove the weeds from the place where you want to situate your circle bed.
2. Mark a circle by going round the centre point in a 0.5 m radius.
3. Loosen the soil outside the circle line.
4. Dig the centre as a bowl and put the soil excavated along the outer edge of the circle on top of the loosened surface.
5. Be careful to keep the shape of the circular bed, (a mountain-shaped mound with 30 cm width at the top and 50 cm width at the bottom plus 25-30 cm height).
6. Put compost and organic matter in the centre.
7. Sow the seeds along the middle of the inner slope of the bed. (Be careful not to sow on top.)
8. Muck the entire mound.
9. Water your circle bed gently.



Later, you can plant a creeper vegetable such as pumpkin, on the outer slope of the circle bed. You can also put kitchen waste into the centre of the bed from time to time. People say that plants grown in circle gardens grow better because they get so talk to each other. What do you think about that?



Sheet Mulch Bed

Sheet mulching is a very interesting method for creating a vegetable flower garden using your organic waste. The nice thing about this method is that it does not require any hard work, like tilling or digging the soil, to build the garden.



To create the sheet-mulch garden, you will need a 35-45 cm layer of mulch, a much thicker layer than in ordinary mulching methods (p. 64) and all the layers should be thoroughly wet. Over the long term, a sheet-mulch garden is said to require less water than the normal 'hard work' kind of garden where you have to dig. You can make the size of your sheet-mulch bed according to the availability of your organic waste supply (dried and green grasses, leaves, straw, etc).

Here, I share step-by-step information from the book, *Earth Users Guide to Permaculture* (Bangalore Press, 1998) written by Rosemary Morrow. Many years ago, I attended her Permaculture course and have been able to remember this method thanks to her inspiring teaching.

What to do	Why do it	What it looks like
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slash long grass and weeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clippings decompose and add organic matter to the soil 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wet whole area thoroughly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rain won't reach the soil through the layers 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add some agricultural lime (if necessary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps bind any heavy metals so they cannot be taken up by plants 	

1 Make the following layers: Suck paper, cardboard, underfelt or even old carpet. Lay overlapping sheets over the whole area.

- Stops weeds and adds more organic matter to the soil



2 Mark out a border with bricks or timber

- Shapes garden space



3 Throw any organic waste such as grass clippings, garden scraps or chopped weeds on the garden bed

- It will also decompose and turn into humus



4 Add old hay or grass to make it 5 cm deep

- Gives more compost to turn into humus



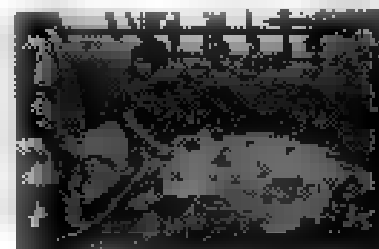
5 Add 19-5 cm of rotted manure, compost or mushroom compost

- Immediate source of plant nutrients



6 Add layer of clean weed-free mulch 10 cm, such as straw, rice hulls

- Holds water in to retain valuable nutrients, protects seedlings, acts as soil temperature control



Easy for children to prepare

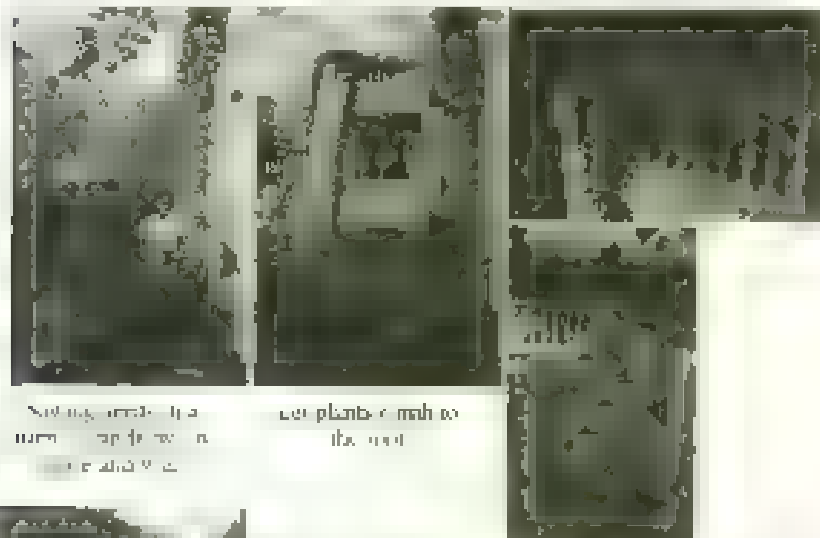


Easy for children to grow

Rooftop Gardens

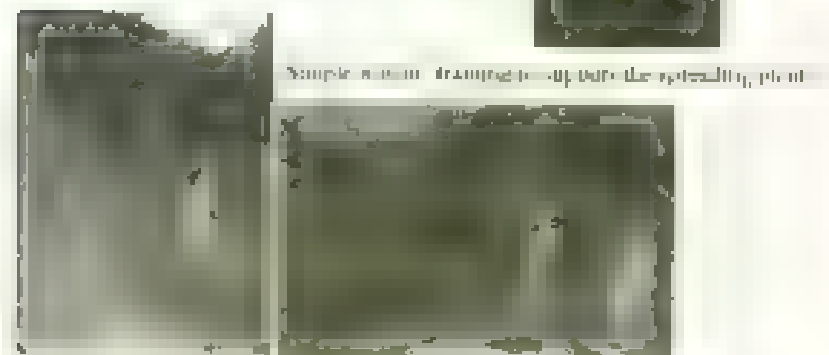
A rooftop garden is another good choice for easy and enjoyable gardening, and is especially well suited to urban households. We planted climbing plants, such as winged beans, Yampi, Louri, Sweet Peas, on the garden soon below. They easily climb the height of a two-storey building. In fact, they became very heavy and out of control. On the children always had a nice place to play. Of course we grow herbs and flowers in pots. Long conditions are a bit of a problem; when a family members go out for more than two weeks, the plants in the pots tend to dry up due to lack of water. We found that most of our climbing plants, grown in basement soil, have usually survived our holidays.

Three images



Noting, climbing plants
up to the wall
and the wall.

Let plants climb to
the wall.



Simple wooden frames to support the climbing plants.

We made this kind of sturdy, more well structured frame for it.



Sturdy frame for climbing plants and flowers.



The Winged bean is one of the most successful plants in our rooftop garden.

Winged bean and Yampi, Louri & Pea



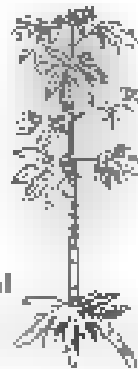
Sword bean (*Canavalia gladiata*) A climbing plant with high drought tolerance, also nice for rooftop gardening. The sowing season is in early-to-mid rainy season (Mar to July) and you can start harvesting young seed pods 4-5 months after sowing. Tender pods can be eaten as a vegetable after boiling & mashing or stir-frying.



Cow pea (*Vigna unguiculata* spp) **Rice bean** (*Vigna umbellata*) These are close relatives of the Yardlong bean, but are bushier and with shorter pods. They have a higher drought and heat tolerance. Young seed pods can be used as a vegetable in stir-fried dishes. Mature seeds can be boiled and eaten as a snack.

Other easy-to-grow vegetables include

Cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) Propagation is from cuttings. A 25-30cm long hard stem with 4-5 growing buds is planted vertically with slight inclination so that 2/3 of the cutting remains above soil. For good growth and yield the plant requires a high temperature and plenty of sunlight. Tubers become ready for harvest in 10-12 months. Cassava roots can be stored under the soil for a long time but once they are harvested, they must be processed within a day or two, to avoid poisoning.



Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) Propagation is from tuber or stem cuttings. The plant does not require much water but needs a lot of sunlight to produce tuber. Young shoots and leaves can be cooked as a vegetable.

Lesser Yam A climber with slender stems and a lot of foliage, grows up to more than 6m, making it another good choice for a rooftop garden. Pieces of tuber or aerial bulbs are planted during the early rainy season. Growth cycle is 8-10 months and it can tolerate a 2-month dry spell.



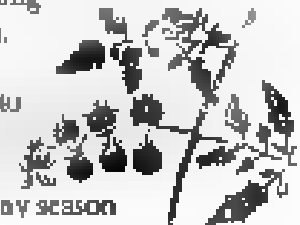
Talinum (*Talinum triangulare*) Propagation is from stem cuttings. Stays the whole year and has pretty pink coloured flowers. Leaves can be sautéed and eaten or added to soup to boost its nutrient value.

Ceylon spinach (*Basella alba* or *rubra*)

Propagation is from seeds or stem cuttings. It can grow almost all the year round. The plants need some support to climb up and spread horizontally. Leaves and young shoots which are rich source of Vitamin A can be cooked and eaten.



Water spinach (*Spinacea aquatica*) This is a creeper plant and can grow on land. It is propagated by seeds and stem cuttings. Can be grown all year round, if water is available. Leaves and young shoots are sautéed and eaten.



Tomato There are various types of tomato plants available. After sowing seeds, the small seedlings will need to be transplanted.

Seedlings start after the rainy season and the plants grow in the winter season.



Lady's Finger Sow seeds from early summer to early season. Harvest can start 60-90 days after seeds are sown.



Roselle **Red sorrel** (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) A close relative of okra, kenaf, and cotton. Easy to grow with little water. Also has fewer pest problems. The plant is an attractive annual shrub that reaches a height of about 1.5m with pretty yellow flowers and red fruit. 3-4 plants are sufficient to produce a good crop for a family. Roselle cordia and jam (page 142) can be made.

from the fruit pulp, calyx, and the sour leaves are also edible.

Ripe seeds can also be dried and eaten as a snack.



Basil/Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*): Considered to be sacred in India. Propagation is from seeds, it prefers a semi-shaded area. Leaves taken with honey are good for relief of the common cold.

Lemon grass (*Cymbopogon citratus*): Tea made from the leaves is deliciously cool and refreshing! Propagation is done by dividing clumps.



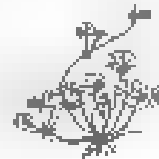
Dill (*Anethum graveolens*): Propagation is from seeds. Both the seeds and leaves are used in cooking and natural remedies. The yellow flowers are also very pretty.

Mint (*Mentha arvensis*): Propagation is from stem cuttings. Fresh leaves are nice in aachars, chutneys, and can also be used to make a soothing drink.



Growing local edible weeds can also be an interesting garden activity. You will find that most of them have medicinal values, too.

Indian Peppercorn (*Centella asiatica*): Perennial herb. Propagation from stems, cuttings, runners; prefers moist soil and a semi-shady location. Leaves can be added to soups.



Amruti weed (*Centella asiatica*): Good as a soil cover. Perennial herb. Leaves are boiled and eaten with rice.

Ivy gourd (*Cucurbita cordifolia*): A wild climbing weed can be grown as a fence-cover plant. Leaves are little bitter, but rich in vitamin A. Also has medicinal uses.



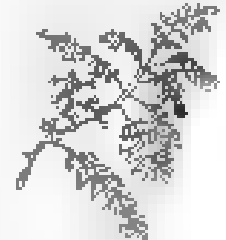
Bush and small tree

Your choice of trees will depend on the size of your garden space. I recommend small to medium sized, multi-purpose plants that can provide a good variety of harvests and usages. We have grown



Small lime: We bought a few varieties of seedlings from a local nursery. Most of them take 2-3 years to fruit. Some of them do not give fruits but the leaves can be used for adding flavour to soups and other dishes. Butterflies and bees like lime flowers.

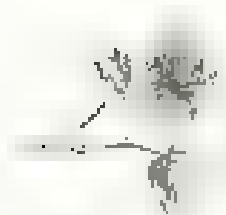
Curry leaf (*Murraya koenigii*): We brought a few seedlings from a local nursery. These propagate by themselves through the fallen seeds. Leaves can be used all year-round for South Indian dishes and for making chutney.



Guava (*Psidium guajava*): Propagation is from seeds, cuttings. We didn't plant this tree; it grew naturally from bird droppings. It typically grows to a height of 3-6 m. It is a fruit tree and the leaves have medicinal value.

Starfruit (*Averrhoa carambola*): The cross-section of this fruit reveals a star shape! That's why we used this fruit as a stamp for making our original wrapping paper (p. 100). This tree will generally grow to a height of about 6-8 m. We purchased a grafted seedling so that the tree would remain at 1-2m, but it gives plenty of fruit two or three times a year. The fruit is rather sour when eaten raw but you can make a delicious chutney with it.






Background: The ability to change a long-term habit is one of the most difficult things to achieve. In this study, we explored the effectiveness of a self-help program designed to help people change their eating habits. The program was based on the principles of behavior change and included a variety of strategies such as goal setting, self-monitoring, and social support. The program was evaluated using a randomized controlled trial design. The results showed that the program was effective in helping people change their eating habits, with participants in the intervention group showing significantly greater improvements in eating behavior than those in the control group. The program was well-received by participants and was found to be a cost-effective way to help people change their eating habits.

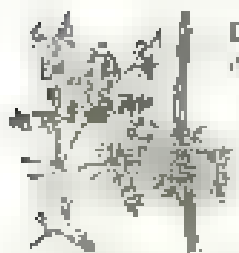
Abstract

It is important to remember that the use of the term "disability" is not a statement of fact, but a statement of opinion. The same person may be considered disabled by one person, but not by another. The definition of disability is subjective and varies from person to person. The purpose of this document is to provide information about the concept of disability, not to make a statement about any individual.



Day itself is a little different from what you know as *camping* in England and is a sort of holiday. We purchase a sleeping bag from a book store, the tent is made by a big  you have deep prices for the tent. Because it is made by the same old people who make the tent, you can see the old people, the old

As long as our garden space is covered we still have plenty of vegetation for more bees and butterflies.

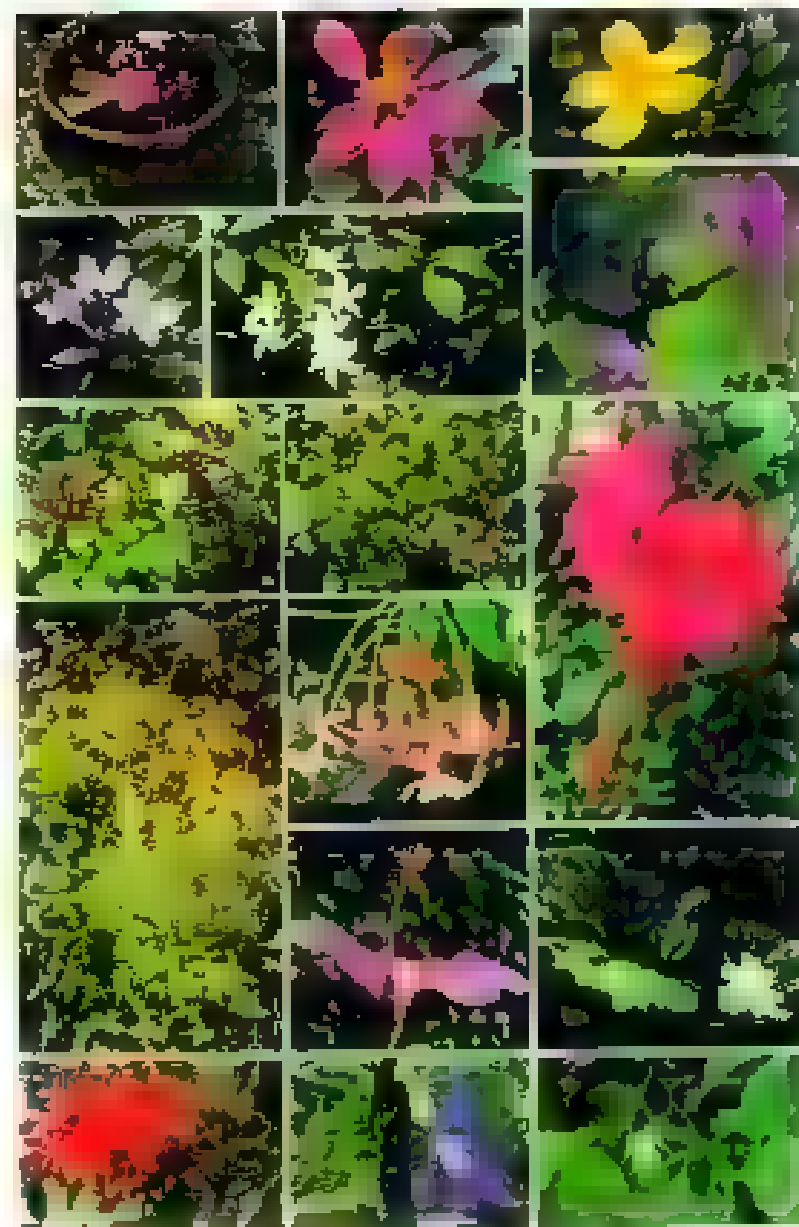


Drumstick *Eurogorgy neriifera* A legume in its tree form, 10-15 m tall, with a thick, dark, highly branched, gnarled trunk. The leaves are bipinnate, 10-15 cm long, with 10-15 pairs of leaflets. The flowers are small, white, and fragrant. The fruit is a long, slender, cylindrical pod, 10-15 cm long, with a thick, dark, leathery skin. The seeds are small, round, and black.

Egyptian sesban *Sesbania grandiflora* Th. ex
a. In part it is an erect shrub but the prostrate or a
spreading suberect form is also found. Prostrate
seeds 10-15 mm. long and 5-6 mm. wide. The
flowers are yellow and the leaves are
dark green, glabrous, with large leaves.



The future seems promising and even hopeful. The Academy's efforts are being met with a growing number of people who are interested in the work.



Sowing, Seedlings and Propagation

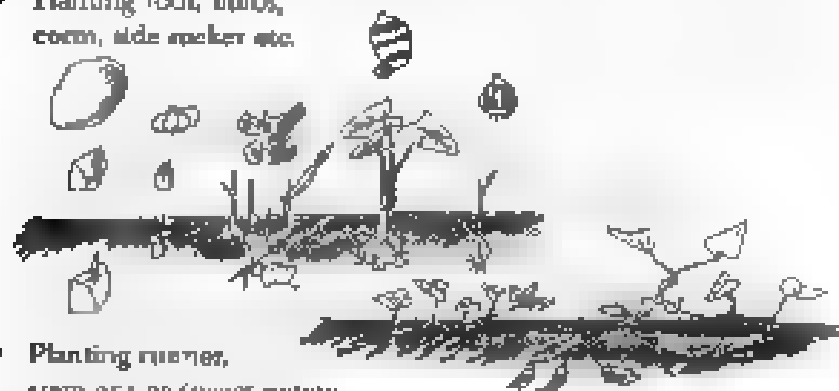
Well anyhow, let's get our seeds into the soil

● Sowing position (Direct Sowing)



Put a seed into the soil, usually at a depth of 3 times the thickness of the seeds

→ Planting root, bulbs, corms, side spoker etc.

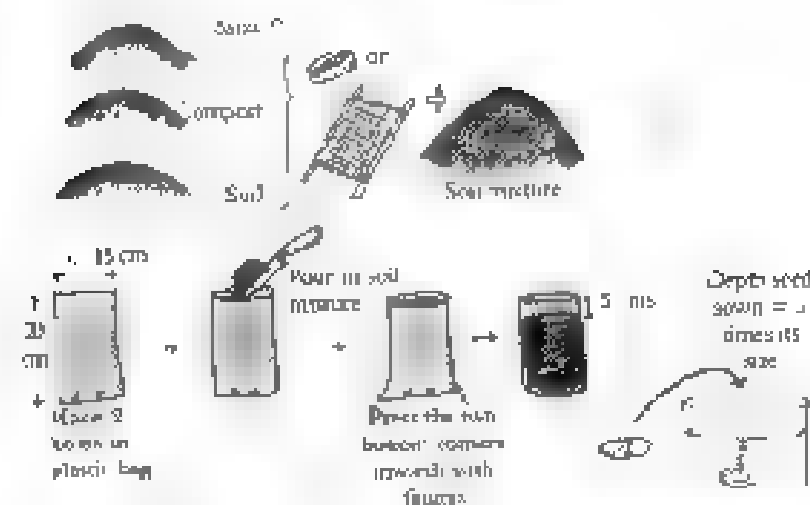


● Planting runner, stem or slips (sweet potato, water convolvulus, ceylon spinach etc)

For some vegetables such as tomato, chillies, and eggplant, you need to make seedlings then transplant them. Soil mixture for seedling soil: compost: sand = 1:1:1



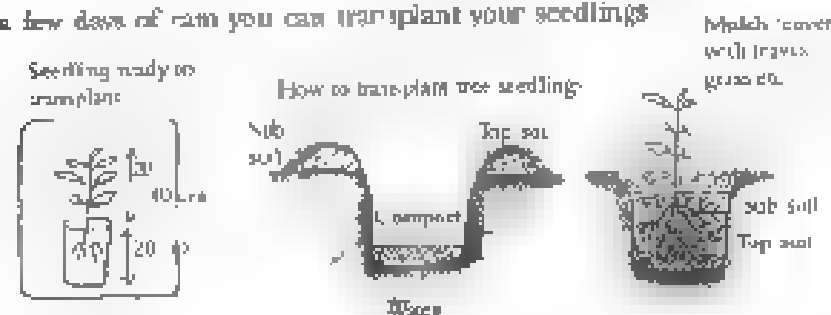
Tree Seedling Preparation



Seedlings can also be prepared in various packaging that is often usually discarded



Rainy season is the best time for tree planting. Are your seedlings ready? Prepare the site before the rain starts. Dig holes 30-40 cm and 70 cm wide and add some compost. After a few days of rain you can transplant your seedlings



Seed Storage

[vegetable]

Don't pick all the fruits at harvest time. Leave a few good fruits on the plant to allow them to ripen for seed harvesting.

After extracting the seeds, dry them well and keep them in an airtight container till the next sowing season.



[tree]

It is important to dry the collected seedpods completely.

Drying

Spread the seedpods on a mat/old newspaper. Dry them in a semi-shaded place where there is good air circulation for at least 5-7 days. (Do not expose them to too much sunlight or the seeds will crack.) Take them inside in the evenings.



Selecting

Remove seeds from their seedpods. Select only the good seeds (those that have proper size, shape, colour, surface).



Storage and Labelling

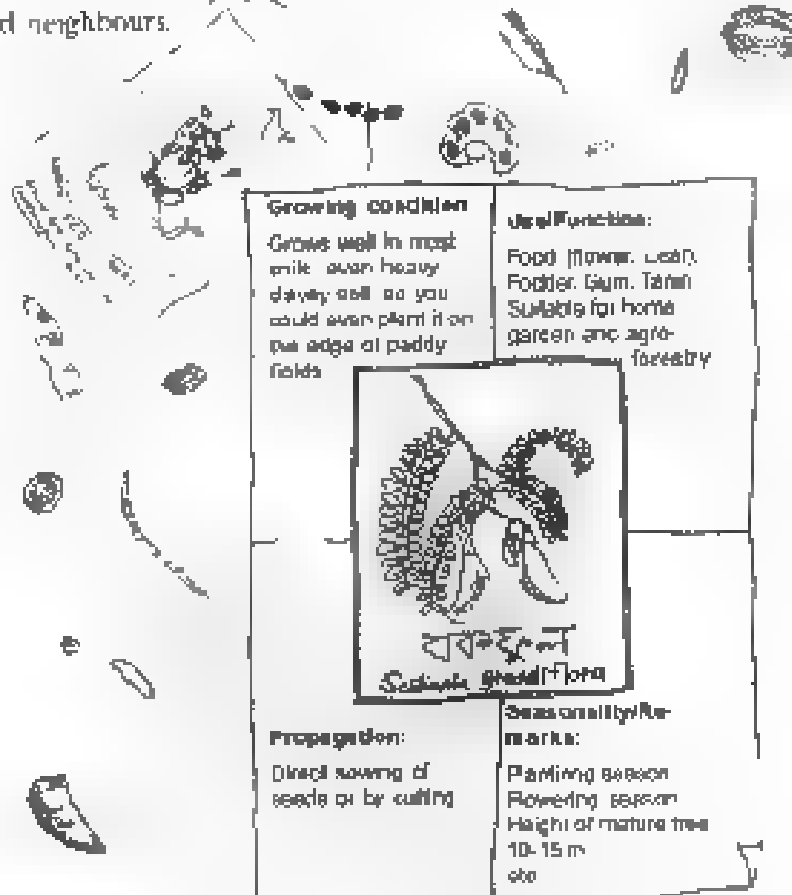
Keep the seeds in either a cloth bag, a glass/plastic bottle or an earthen jar. To avoid moisture, use roasted charcoal or roasted rice covered in a cloth bag. To avoid insect attacks, add a few drops of neem oil or mustard oil.



You may want to note the following information on your seeds.

- Seed name
- Date (Date seeds were collected and bottling date)
- Place from where it was collected

Extra seeds can be packed nicely to exchange with your friends and neighbours.



Composting

Compost is natural fertilizer made from rotten organic waste such as garden waste and kitchen scraps. Compost scavenges the soil natural salts that help make soil fertile. The process of making compost is simple, so that children can also easily help to prepare it.

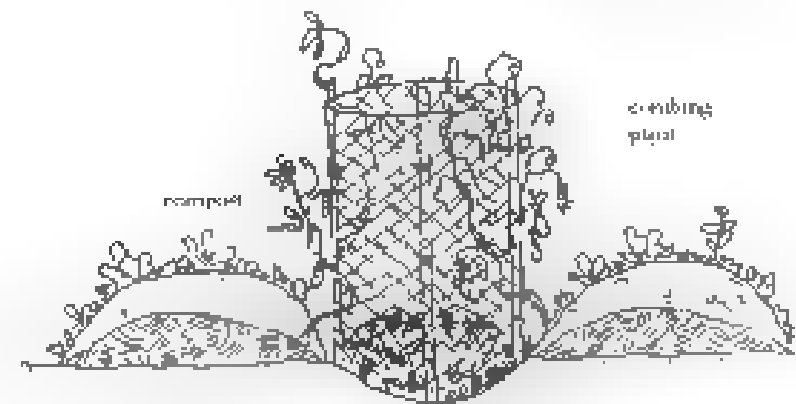
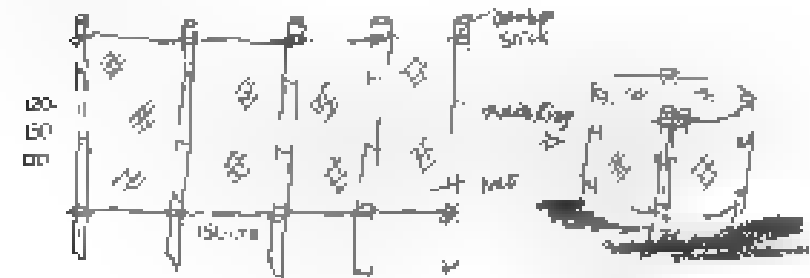
To start your compost, make a layer of dry organic matter (dry tree leaves, weeds, straw, etc.), add another layer of raw organic matter (fresh leaves, aquatic weeds, fruit and vegetable peels, bird, small animal droppings, etc.) and a layer of soil in a 3 : 2 : 1 ratio. You can also simply cover your kitchen wastes with a layer of dry leaves, green grass each time you add to your compost pit/pile. In this case you will need to sprinkle in some water each time to keep the pile moist. It takes about 2.5 - 3 months for your compost to be ready to use in the garden. When ready for use the compost should not have any rotten or unpleasant smell and will be of a dark blackish colour.

Simple design for compost making

Using terracotta ring These rings are actually for making water canals or wells but are excellent for gardening as well; a small garden bed border or a ring for the base of your compost area.



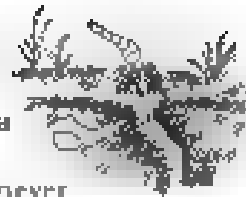
Using net This method also increases the growing space for climbing vegetables.



After your compost is ready, you can shut the ring or net to make a new compost in a new location.

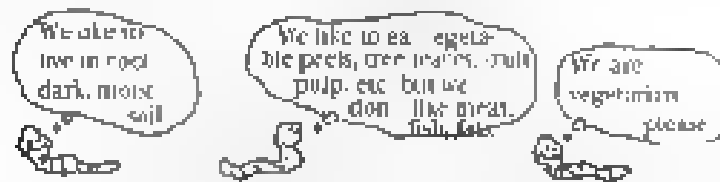
Vermi-compost

With the help of earthworms, kitchen wastes like vegetable and fruit peels, can be turned into a rich manure called vermi-compost.



Though Green Sprout members were never successful with their vermi-composting attempt (see p. 18), I still think this is one of the most interesting and useful home-based waste management systems. You can do a how to make vermi-compost search and find lots of information and examples on the web as well as in books. I will share one method instructed by my husband here.

Red worms (*Lombicus rubellus*) or red wigglers (*Eisenia foetida*) are the types of earthworms necessary for making vermicompost.

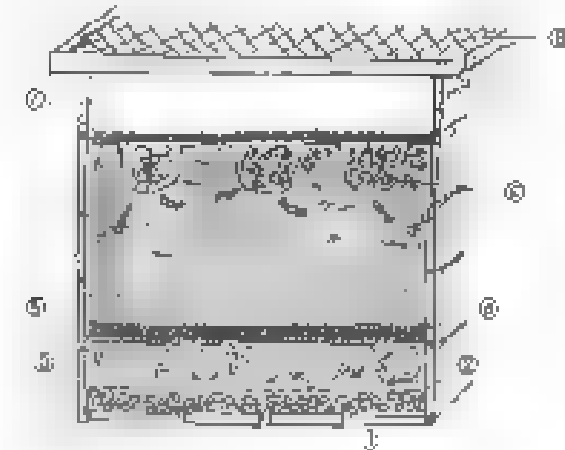


Worm bin for a small family of 3-4 persons producing about 500-600 gm of non-greasy food waste everyday.

Follow steps 1 to 8.

- 1 Take an old wooden packing crate (about 70-75 cm wide, 100 cm long, and 50-60 cm deep), and drill about 12-15 drainage holes at the bottom.
- 2 Make a 4-5 cm layer of small pebbles and/or broken bricks.
- 3 Build up a 15-20 cm deep layer of crumbled newspapers, corrugated or ripped cardboard (these should first be soaked for 2-3 hours in water and squeezed out well before being placed into the box).
- 4 Cover this layer of crumbled paper with a 2-5 cm layer of silty soil.
- 5 Introduce the earthworms (500 gm - 800-2000 mature worms) in between the wet layers.
- 6 Now pile on a layer of straw and dry leaves 30-35 cm deep (these should be first cut up into small pieces). Small quantities of food waste will be buried into this layer every day in different spots.

- 7 Cover the top with a double layer of soaked jute bags/cloth in order to keep the surface cool and moist.



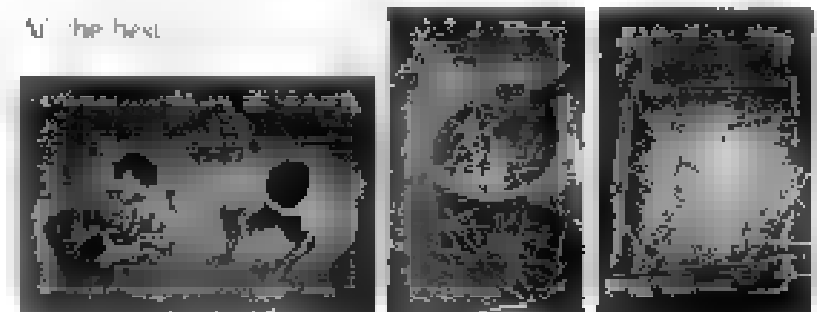
- 8 Lastly, place a net cover over the top of your crate to protect the earthworms from rats, cats, birds, etc.

Maintenance Sprinkle some water over the top to keep the jute wet but mix your kitchen waste up. The surface layer is a different spot each day.

Harvesting the compost After six to eight weeks, the top layer of your vermi-compost bin should be decomposed and look like brown tea dust. When this happens, stop watering for 2-3 days and don't add any new waste.

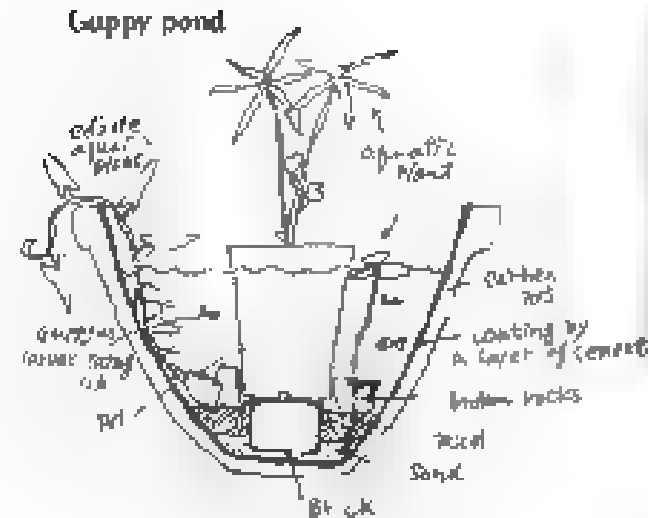
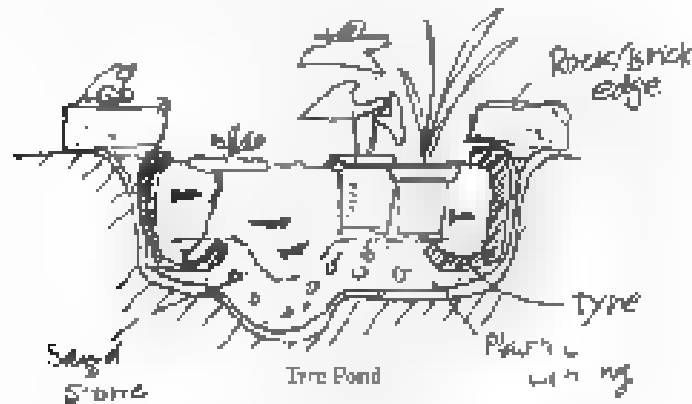
Remove the top layer (the top 12-15 cm), and replace it with a fresh layer of straw. Go back to the old routine of adding waste and keeping the jute bags wet. After 3-4 cycles, the entire bin ends have to be replaced and a new bin needs to be started.

At the next

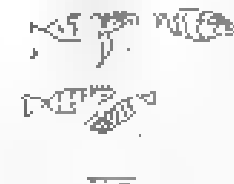


Making Small Scale Ponds

If you set up an aquatic bed in your garden, the biodiversity of your garden will be greatly increased as more birds and butterflies will be attracted. Because our house is situated beside a large community pond, we found that some birds that prey on fish were a deterrent to keeping small fish in our outdoor ponds. We later had to place net covers on our small ponds to protect the fish inside from those birds.



Mr. and Mrs. Frank Farley

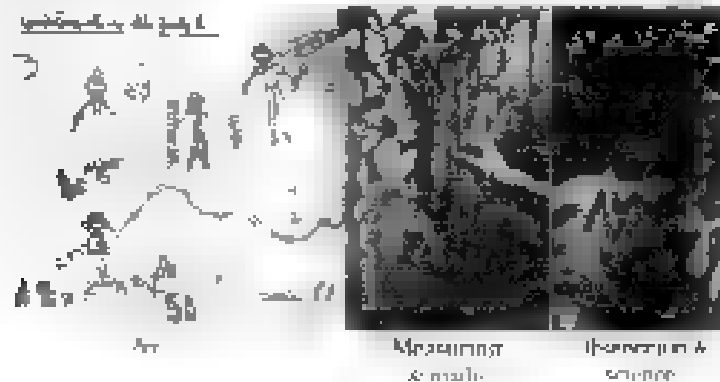


Bird baths: Even if you only put water in a terra-cotta pot (without any fish, placed in your garden you will get various birds that love to stop by for bathing. I have observed many birds enjoy their bathing rituals, especially around 2 pm in the afternoons.



Gardening as a Learning Opportunity

Gardening creates many opportunities for discovery and learning, for all ages. These include writing skills, art, plant science, mathematics, nutrition, a cooperative attitude – the list goes on and on! Garden-based learning can be explored with children as a home-based activity, or together with the school curriculum.



For example, keeping record of your own vegetable calendar and profile provides a practical introduction as well as a learning opportunity for our children.

Our Vegetable Calendar

Year _____

Vegetable		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Yard long Bean													
Tomato													

Sowing Seed
 Germination
 Flowering
 Harvest period
 Collecting Seed

Vegetable profile

Seed from _____

Name of Vegetable _____

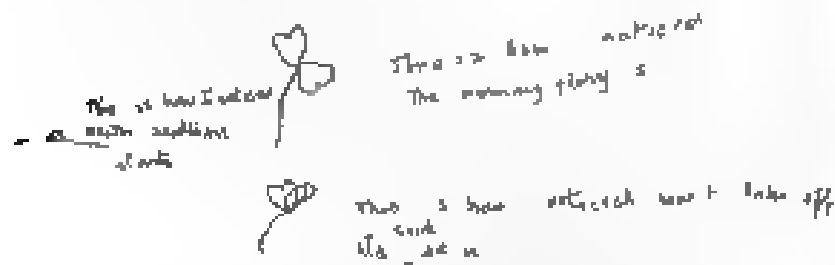
Work in Garden _____

General Information	Record in our Garden
Local name _____	Date _____
Scientific name _____	Work done _____
Sowing Season _____	
Germination Period _____	
Harvesting Season _____	
Growing condition	
sunlight _____	
water _____	
soil _____	
Nutrition fact _____	
Remarks _____	

Recorder name _____ Date _____

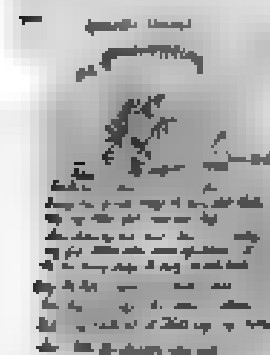


Butterfly or Moth? Let's keep observing and keeping a record
When my daughter was 6 years old, she wrote this down on her observation record about the germination of morning glories.



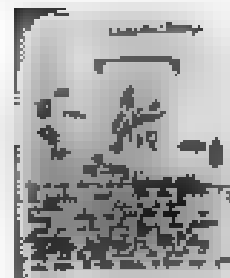
I gave each of my children a Garden Record Booklet and at the same time, I kept one notebook for myself. As I mentioned in the section on Droppy and Yummy (p. 9), we kept observation records like this. Manon was in Class 1 at that time, so I needed to assist her a bit in keeping her record.

From Manon's notebook: (Her writing has been typed in its original form). She coloured her drawings nicely.



8.1.99

Now Yummy has become big and fat. Yummy has finished eating the ram leaf. That's why my mother put new ram leaf. Now it has big lines on it. Now it is eating very fast. It has eaten some of them. It has eaten some more. The color is like pink, grey. The shape is round. It is in black colour. Some leaves are dry. It is brown in colour. But Yummy didn't eat it. I saw when my mother took pigeon food out.



9.1.99

Now it has become more bigger and fatter. There is new paper in the bottle. Yummy is eating very fast. That day it was small, now it has become bigger and bigger. Yummy has eaten half of the ram leaf. My mother has given some leaves. If it finishes, my mother will give more. Many dry leaves has fall down, the stick is also brown. The clothes colour is brown and white.



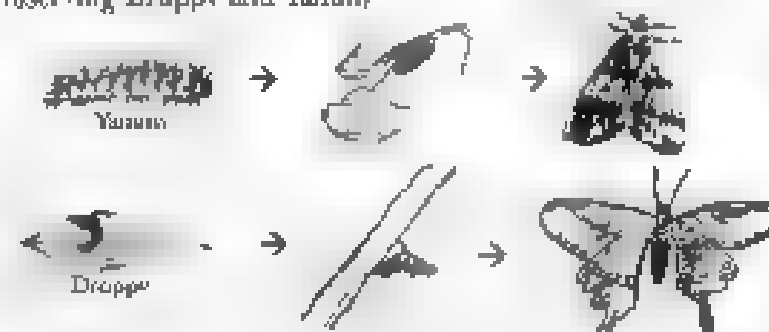
9.1.99

Yummy is a moth not a butterfly. Yummy has come out from the cocoon. The moth is very big because of Yummy's droppings.

My son Shanconu (Class 9), on the other hand, wrote a much more minimalist record like this:



My own record is shown here, too. It was really an exciting moment for me when I actually understood the difference between the metamorphosis of a butterfly and a moth by observing Droppy and Yummy.



Observation and record keeping brings a lot of enjoyment and discovery for both the children and parents:

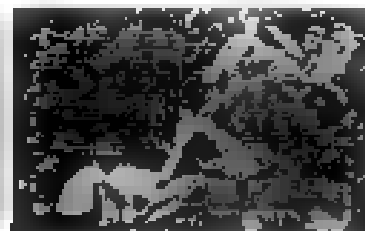
Keeping a record on our Friend-Trees

This is one example of a Friend-Tree record kept over a long period (p. 10). If you take pictures from time to time you will have nice memories of both your tree and your children – they both grow pretty fast, don't they?

Champa (*Michelia champaca*) known as Bowar tree



Tree height
cm 34 cm
(05.11.1999)



Tree height 1m43 cm (13.06.2002)



tree height 3m 20 cm
(13.07.2002)



This is my friend-tree Champa in my garden. We purchased it, bringing from the nursery and some plants & soil and it took about 1000 rupees. It has 2 Sunbeams flying around it for 3 months unstopably. It is a very beautiful tree. I don't like measuring it because of its shape. It is

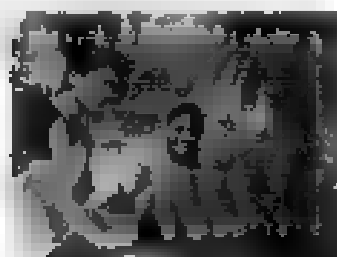
very tall in the garden. It is already reached up to the top of the house. It is very beautiful from the window of my room. It is very beautiful.

really surprise
my friend tree
is growing much
faster than me

Shantana
June 2007

"Oh, How tall!"

Friend Tree in March 2007



This is my Friend-tree Anatto (*Bixa orellana*). I kept my record for about one year. Sometimes I missed to write down, but this helped me to satisfy my curiosity to know about my tree. I was eagerly waiting to know when and what kind of flowers would become up. You may think, or do you have such time to keep record, or you may think keeping record is just too much. Try for one year, then you can judge. Mean time your children may find some interest in your activity! Then they may join.

29.09.1999

over 100% is
greenish
which is
colour



The central part of the
upper portion of the
twig is black green
and soft



18 cm

length 18 cm
width 5 cm

The upper part
of the tree

is
green leaf

02.03.2000

Colour of the leaf
is reddish greenish

28.11.2000



→ seeds have
started turning



Main leaves have
appeared in the upper part
of the tree

8.10.2000

5 cream
coloured
peels

5 cm



From notebook

Record 1999-2000

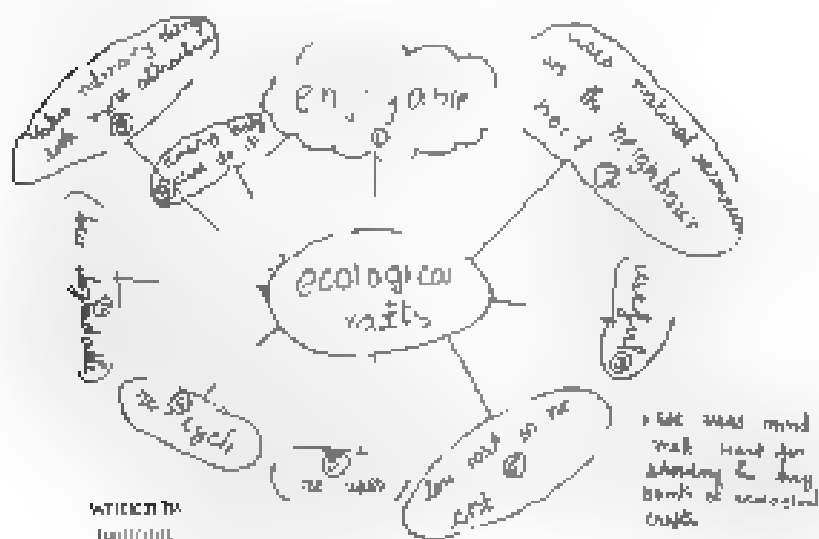
Month	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Date	20	31	28		15	18	26	27
Temp	27°C	26			24	30	23	
Height	3'	109	12	114	177			168
	cm	cm	cm	cm	cm			cm
Flower	No	No	No	No	No	started	2th started	finished
Prun./Seed								

Eco-Crafting

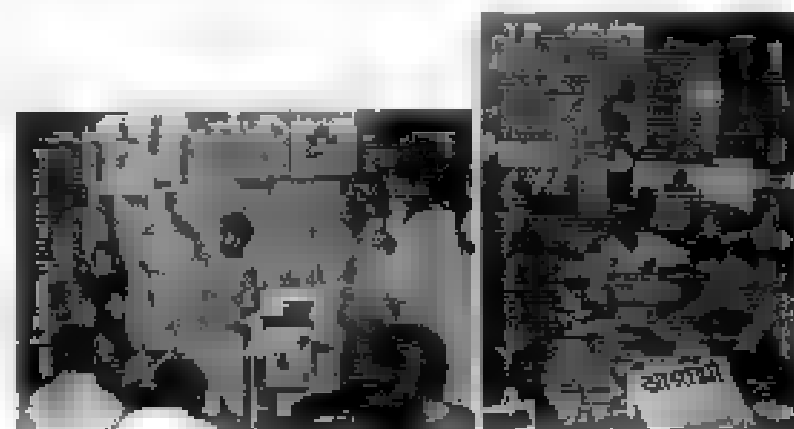


Thinking about Ecological Craft Ideas

Green Sprout would like to share the idea of eco-crafting with you, as we see it:

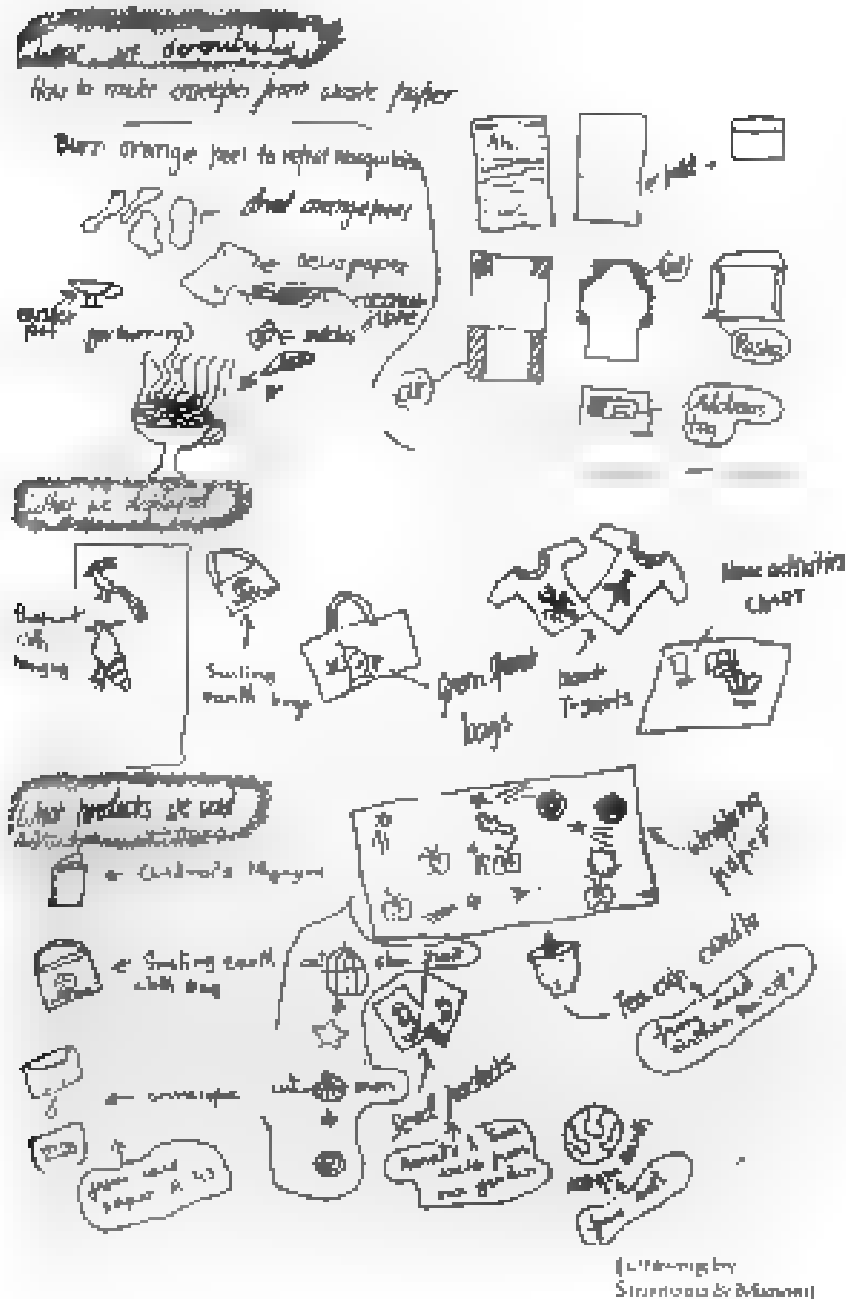


- ① Ecological crafts are very enjoyable. We can guarantee that.
- ② The most important aspect of eco-crafting is to use natural resources that are readily available in the neighbourhood such as leaves, flowers, seeds, twigs and soil.
- ③ What you end up making is not only for decoration, but should become something useful.
- ④ Eco-crafting is usually a low-cost or no-cost activity since you need not buy many new materials (except for colours and glue).
- ⑤ Try to re-use as many things as possible: waste paper, earthen tea cups, orange peels, candle wax, etc.
- ⑥ Focus on trying to use recycled papers (including newspapers, wrapping paper, old envelopes, office paper, etc.).
- ⑦ All eco-crafts should be bio-degradable, that is, they should easily return to the soil.
- ⑧ Eco-crafting turns dull, day-to-day things, into attractive items. This encourages other people to use your products. For example, nobody would buy a plain ball of mud but if you paint it creatively people just may buy it.
- ⑨ Not just for the rich, but certainly not least – EVERYBODY CAN DO IT!



An Eco-work exhibition in Kolkata, January 2011

Variety of Ecological Craft



Garden Crafts

Vegetables are beautiful. Children love harvesting. After harvesting the vegetables from you, in the games, you can make various crafts from them, just before eating them up.



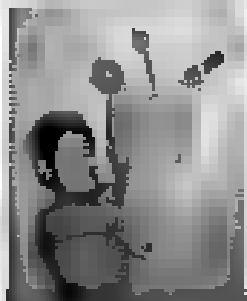
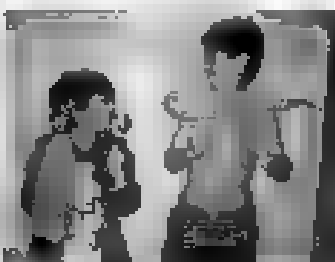
Here we share some of our Post-harvest activities



With red chili
(Hot crown and necklace)



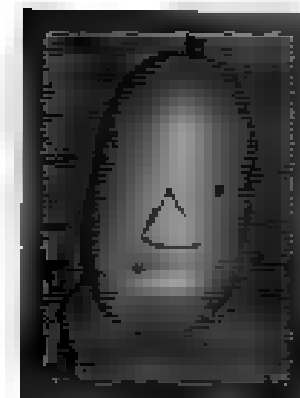
With fresh tomato
(Tomato snake
balancing)



With various vegetables
(Vegetable puppet show)

With gourd

Even if gourd becomes too hard to eat when you miss the harvest timing don't be disappointed. You can have fun with



Gourd untern

Place a candle inside. Turn on candle. All the oil will flow out of the gourd (so safely!)



① Harvest a gourd



② Cut the bottom off hollow out the first six seeds



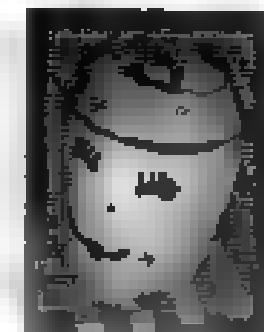
③ Draw a face or carve other design and carve it out



After 3 weeks the design on gourd slowly dries up, giving you a dry gourd lantern. You can keep for a long time



You can also make different kinds of colourful masks from dried gourd. My children made a 'Welcome' gourd that has lasted a very long time. This mask still welcomes us and all of our guests - even 10 years after we first hung it by our door.

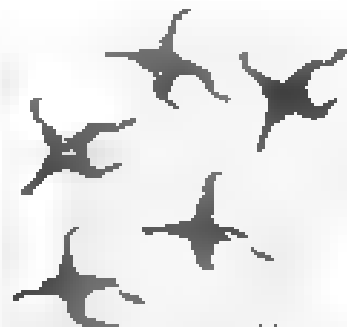
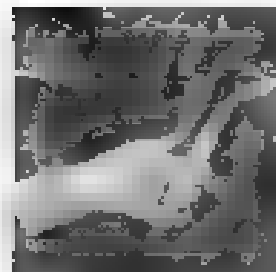


Welcome gourd

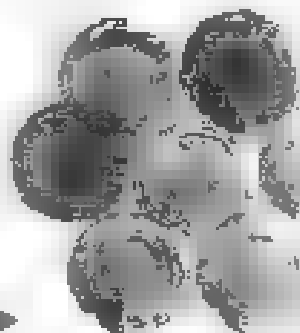
Vegetable Stamp

A good variety of vegetables and fruits will bring you with an idea results both in a creative and new beautiful wrapping paper by cutting vegetables, putting colours in them, and printing designs on a large piece of paper.

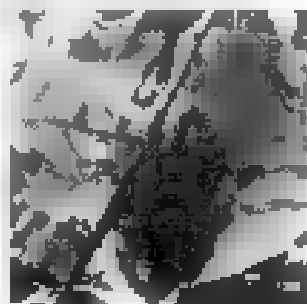
Winged bean



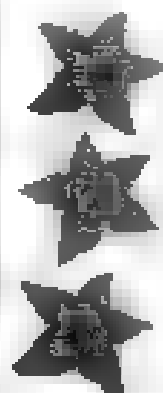
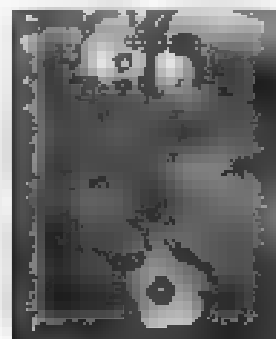
Onion



Sunflower

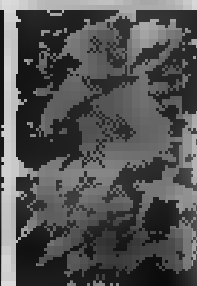
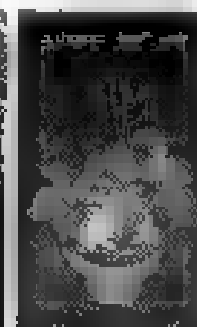
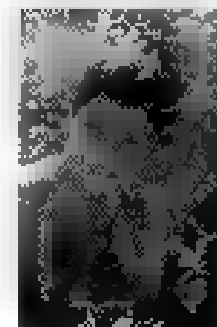
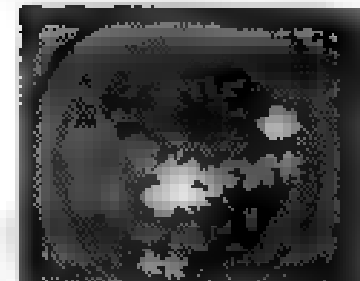


Older lady's finger

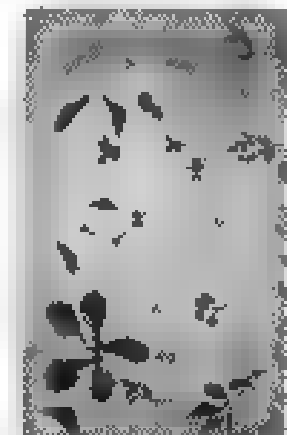
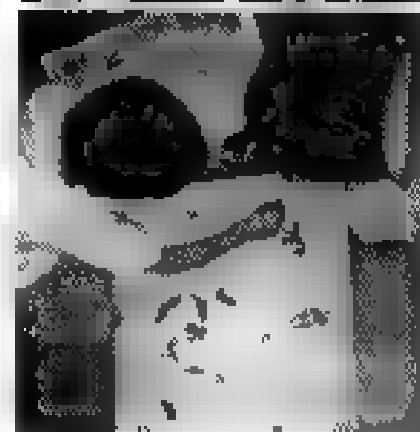


With flowers

Flowers from your garden can not be eaten, but they can be used for wedding cards. And thanks to these beautiful flowers, you can create a beautiful peace tree.



Pressed flowers can be arranged in a large sheet of paper and then a gentle glued down.

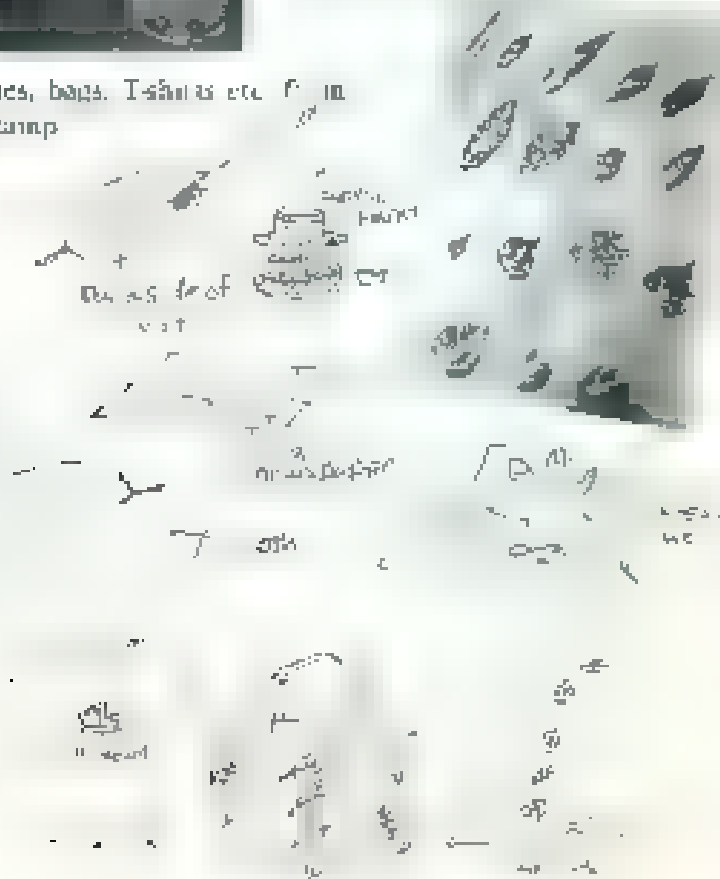


With leaves and seeds

To do this, you will work with your cup of green paint when you create your plant prints. This is great for kids, as it is a chance for them to be creative with the paint. Besides, it's a good idea to use the paint to create a green background for the plant prints.

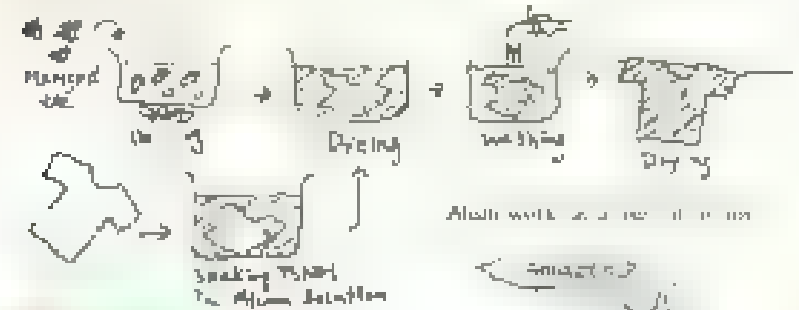


Tapestries, bags, T-shirts etc. from leaves stamp



Natural dyes

You can make your own natural dyes using the leaves and seeds of plants and herbs. The seeds and leaves of plants that are not edible are the best for this. You can use the seeds and leaves of plants that are not edible to create natural dyes.



Fabric-paint Masterpiece

Bird cloth hanging



The fabric with halftone was kept at the art club during the morning workshop. The children were given the opportunity to draw and paint their own birds. The children were given the opportunity to draw and paint their own birds. The children were given the opportunity to draw and paint their own birds.

Bird bag

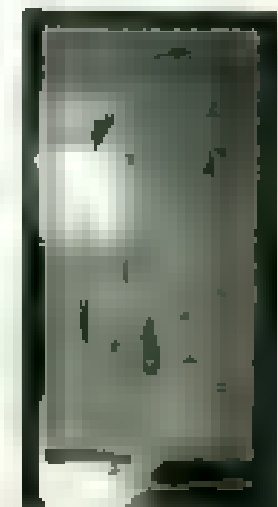
The children were given the opportunity to draw and paint their own birds. The children were given the opportunity to draw and paint their own birds. The children were given the opportunity to draw and paint their own birds.



Lesson T-shirts



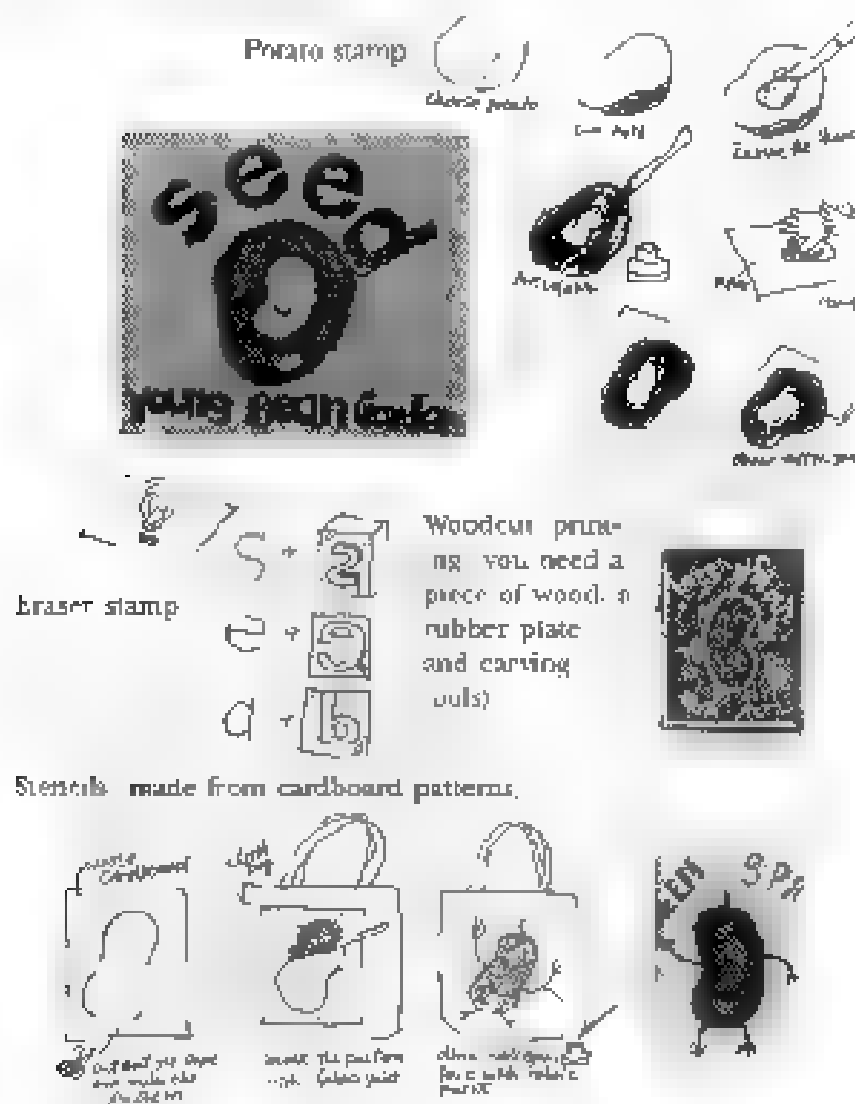
Animal table cloth and curtain



Logo Making

Creating an original logo for your home-based activities is a very encouraging and interesting thing to do. Children love designing their own logo and developing your own logo brings a special feeling to the group – gives some sort of professionalism to your home-based activities.

A logo can be made using various materials and methods.



Book Making

Manasa (Class 3) made the booklet, *My Nature Garden Book of Birds*. She described twelve of the birds she often observed in our garden. She checked a reference book to look up each bird's name, description, food habits, and call.



Recycling & Conservation

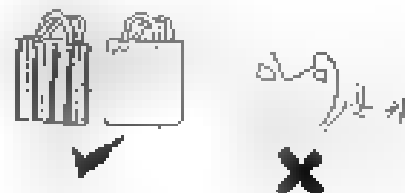


4Rs — Reduce Reuse, Recycle, Rot

You can try introducing the 4R solution with your children for tackling household waste.

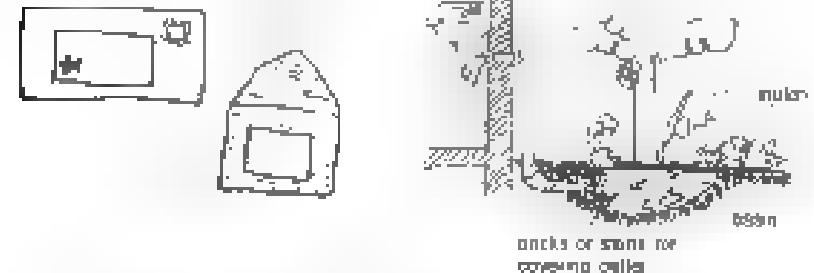
Reduce Make it a part of your lifestyle to constantly reduce your consumption of daily goods which create waste, especially plastics.

- Segregate your household waste by setting up separate dustbins.
- Reduce your use of plastic carry bags. Children can make their own cloth bag designs for family members (p. 139); keep one handy wherever you go.



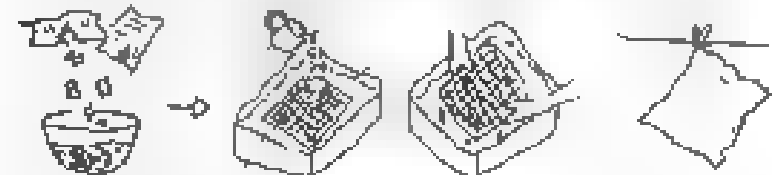
Reuse Use waste materials over again for another purpose rather than just throwing them away.

- Reuse envelopes by putting a label over the front; make new envelopes from waste paper.
- Reuse grey water for gardening.



Recycle Recycling means reprocessing old materials and waste to create usable materials or products of comparable quality. For example, children can recycle waste paper into recycled hand-made paper. You can also make your household a part of the recycling chain by categorizing waste materials (e.g. glass, metal, paper, etc.) and cooperating with door-to-door waste buyers.

- Making recycled paper (p. 104)



Rot Make a compost pit or heap to make sure the nutrients in your organic kitchen waste are going where they should – they will rot in the designated bin, and you can use the rich manure to grow your plants.

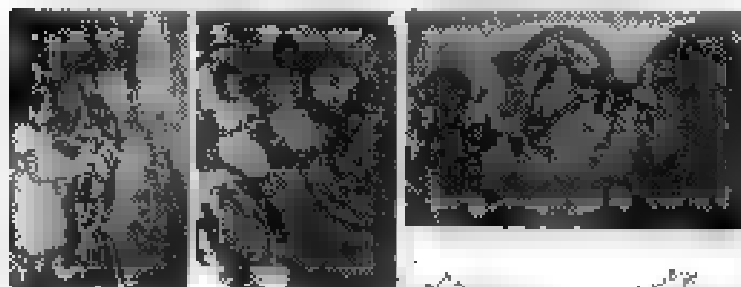
- Making compost (p. 82)



Handling of Possessions

Taking care of your own goods and using them so that they last a long time is another way to ensure that wastes are kept to a minimum. With a little help from the Hindu gods, you can encourage your children to handle their own goods with more care.

Vishvakarma is the god of tools and machines. On this festival day, which falls sometime in September, people involved in mechanical and hands-on trades usually clean up their own tools, cycles, rickshaws, various machines. Children can also take this opportunity to spend time cleaning their bicycles and offering a prayer that their cycles will remain “fit” and in good working condition for a long time to come.



Also in relation to Hindu mythology, there are a wide variety of plants that are considered to be holy and people believe that gods and goddesses exist in the rivers, ponds, and mountains. These kinds of eco-friendly thoughts are slowly being forgotten in the urban areas, but are still found and practised in rural areas. They help people to remember that they are just one small link in the whole ecological chain of life.



These thoughts also back up the attitude that we should take good care of plants and our surrounding environment. In other words, they are actually connected with the concept of conservation of our natural resources. It might be interesting to discuss such ideas with your children, as well.

On a day-to-day basis, it is important to consider children as “young consumers.” If you show your children that you prefer to find eco-friendly products when you make a purchase, you are setting an example for them. This may not always be very easy, but do try to keep it in mind when you are shopping. Your attitude and choices now will help your children become ecologically conscious consumers in the future.

No packaging or with biodegradable packaging material so that less or no waste is generated

Local products so that producers are re-payed transport energy is saved,

Recycling encouraged so that less or no waste



Usage of local natural resources so that waste management and conservation toward local natural resources is possible

Safe & healthy so that responsible methods of production, storage or consumption and human health, no pollution, organic agriculture products are preferable

Soap Making

Did you know that old cooking oil can be used to make handmade soap? Why not give it a try?

When 1 cc of the cooking oil we use gets drained from our kitchen sink into the sewage system, the ecosystem requires 98 litres of fresh water to bring the water quality back to a level in which fish can survive.

Soap, made from oil and caustic soda, is also more eco-friendly since it is biodegradable, as compared to factory-made detergents that can badly affect our environment, especially water bodies. Detergents (found in washing powder for toilets and dishes, shampoos, even toothpaste) contain chemical components, surface active agents like LAS or ABS, Alkyl Benzene Sulphonate and phosphates, which work to increase their cleaning power. However, these chemicals are harmful to our health in the long term and don't biodegrade easily in natural systems, remaining in the soil and water as toxic pollutants.

There are two general processes for making soap. One is a boiling process and the other is a cold process. The boiling process is quick, while the cold process takes more time. The cold process may be more suitable if you are working with children because it is generally safer and easier. It also saves fuel/wood.

You can try out the following recipe:

Ingredients

- Leftover kitchen cooking oil: 3.3 litre,
- Caustic soda: 500 g) available from any hardware shop
- Water: 1000 cc
- Herbal additions: basil leaves, extract from neem leaves, dried orange peels, etc.)



Method

1. Put caustic soda and water into a metal bucket and stir slowly. Be careful, as the temperature will rise as high as 100° c).
2. Once Solution 1 has become transparent, add the oil, stir it well and stir continuously.
3. Can it be seen in 4- 90 minutes till 2 becomes thick.
4. Now add herbal items and pour into the moulds (10 x 10 x 5).
5. Cover 4 with a cloth and leave to set for about six months.
6. Cut 5 into pieces, use your soap for washing dishes and clothing.



***Note:** If you want to make bath or facial soap, it is better to use fresh vegetable oil.

The Problem of Over-Packaging and Waste

I share the following experience to demonstrate a common problem that relates to packaging in a so-called 'developed' country like Japan. It seems obvious to me that developing countries should not simply follow the systems mapped out by developed countries, especially when it comes to packaging.

My mother in Japan sent a parcel to my children in India. Of course, my children were very happy to find there were sweets inside the parcel; and after I gave my permission, they started opening it up.

They first removed a thin cardboard box cover *then* they tore into another thin plastic cover *then* they unwrapped a layer of wrapping paper to find a tin box inside. They opened the cover of the tin box cover and rolled back several sheets of paper that had official greetings written on it in Japanese (which they could not even read – so it was totally wasted' on them). They then had to remove a plastic protection sheet. *Now* had they finally reached the sweets? No! To their great disappointment, they found that each sweet was still individually packaged in its own little plastic pouch. We all shouted, "This is toooooo much!" My son brought scissors and cut into one packet. Finally, after this long struggle they were able to take a bite out of one of the Japanese sweets!

It seemed almost like a joke to us – why would such a small piece of sweet need such complicated wrapping? It is simply too much. As I am Japanese myself I was deeply upset to see the pile of packaging waste sitting in front of us. I even took a photograph of it as evidence.

With this in mind, think about some of the traditional Indian ways of packaging



things – simple, natural, and much more energy efficient *things* (newspaper bag), brown paper (usually tree-free paper), wax-coated paper, tree leaves and lotus leaves are just some of the materials that have been used for packaging in India. The situation is, however, changing very fast these days. Various factory-made products are increasingly being used and most of them are packed in plastics. As a result, there is a noticeable rise in the amount of plastic waste being created here in India too, with no foreseen plan to deal with it.

There is no doubt that plastics hold certain advantages as packing materials and have contributed greatly in improving our quality of life and technology, especially in areas such as transport, communication, and electronics. But we need to reduce the unnecessary use of plastic, creating non-biodegradable, toxic wastes. Many people neatly put it out of their minds that plastic comes from petroleum, a limited fossil resource. We should also remember that, in addition to its use and disposal, the production process for plastic also creates great environmental health hazards.

Compared to plastic packaging, using traditional Indian materials is actually much more 'advanced' in terms of the ecological impact. Indians should be proud of these original systems, and not just blindly follow the "throwaway culture" that has become the norm in developed countries.

Children can take positive action to reduce plastic waste after they have come to realise the value of traditional materials that are eco-friendly and represent a more sustainable way of utilizing natural resources and other available materials.



Respect and use traditional packaging!

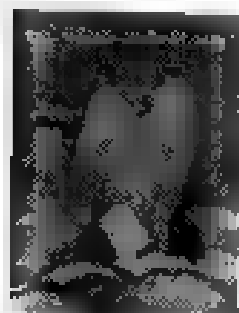
Earthin deposit
cup (bhat)

Old newspaper
packets (dhat)

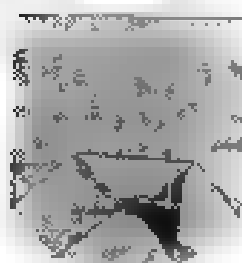


Let's make a
KINARA with
an Earthin

Oral dates (dhat pata)



Longa is widely used
in local school shops



Anga is unique. Often school
bags are made. Through
the main school, an annual
competition is held to see
who can make the best one.

Hold Banana leaf
and make
shape (use young
leaf)



Hold opposite
side



Combine with the
sides making a
small mountain in
the centre



Put the stick to
connect the
join



Wet over.
Small bowl

bat is ready

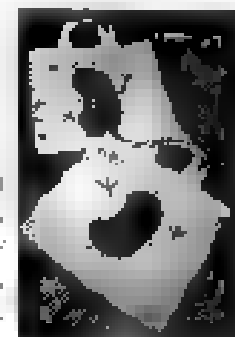


Eco-bag

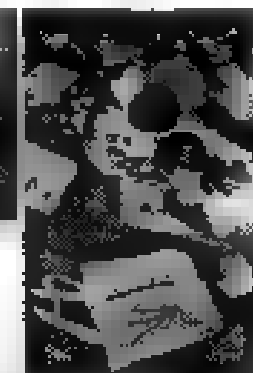
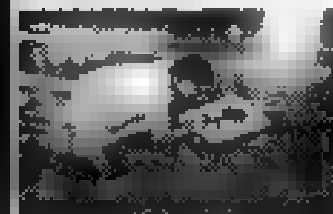
Green Sprout has a message for you



The reason we
made this bag is
because we want to
reduce the use of
plastic packets. We
have seen many
places where plastic
packets have not been featured
around everywhere greatly
disturbing Mother Nature. And the
plastic packets are also making our
lives uncomfortable. So, try save
nature. We made this bag by
stamping the Green Sprout and Pea
Sprout logo on it with fabric paints.
It's fun. You can also do it using
your own logo. You can do it as a
family activity too."



Green Sprout
helped other
children and eco-
groups to make
bags in several
workshops



Handmade Solar Cooker

As I mentioned in our solar cooker episode (p. 43), my son was involved in making several handmade solar cookers himself, so I decided to borrow the poster he made for his school science project to see how to make one.

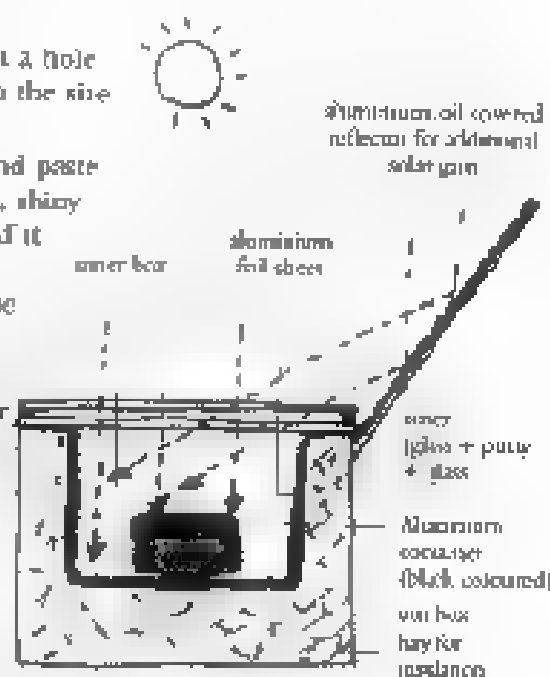
Hi, Friends, here's a way to have fun, learn something and actually help! It's the Science: Sweat & Solar project!

Here is a list of the things you will need:

2 rolls of aluminium foil, 1 big box and 1 smaller-sized one, hay, glue, tape, 2 glass sheets and putty.

How to make:

- Seal up the bigger of the two boxes to trap air within it.
- Stuff it with hay.
- Close the box and cut a hole in its top according to the size of the inner box.
- Take the inner box and paste aluminium foil onto its shiny side up (don't worry if it wrinkles). Once this is finished, paint the base and three sides with black poster paint.
- Now insert the smaller box into the bigger box and tape it up. This is the first part.
- Find a large piece of flat cardboard (bigger than the area of the smaller box).
- Paste a sheet of aluminium foil onto it. It should be pasted onto the side opposite the shiny side of the solar box. Now, take the two glass sheets and make a sandwich of glass and putty to ensure that no air escapes or gets in. It must be dead air space.



- Place the glass sheet on the box, ensuring that no air can escape. If there is a gap between the glass and box, it can be levelled out with putty.
- Finally, you need to paint an aluminiumiffin carrier with black shellac paint.

Now we go to the Boileau!

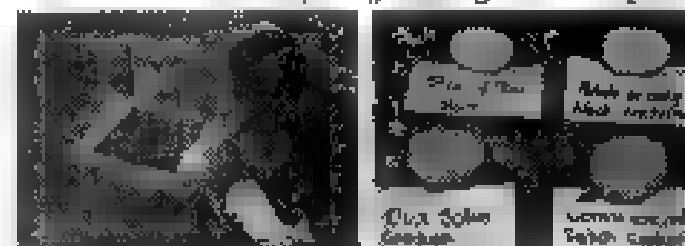
- Things done to prevent heat loss: Insulating with hay/saw, closing up of gaps, painting box black on the inner side.
- Why a blackiffin carrier? Because it absorbs heat.
- Things done to prevent radiation of heat: Double cover of glass, black inner box.

What to take into consideration when setting up:

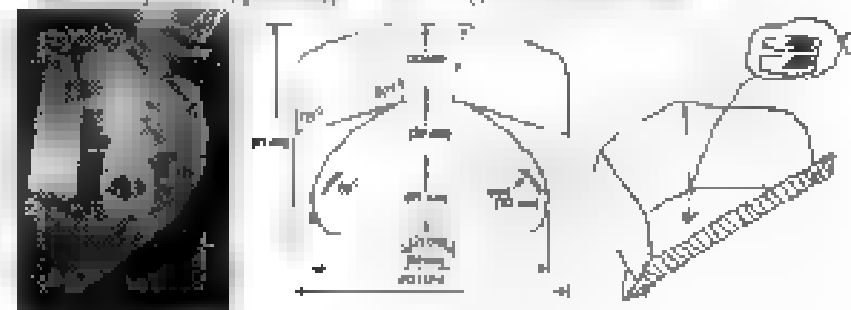
- The sun is at a different height from the horizon every season.
- The sun is in various positions as it travels from east to west.
- You need to adjust your solar box panel from time to time according to the position of the sun so that the maximum amount of light is allowed in.
- Food: Put the normal amount of food you would cook in theiffin carrier, and leave for 3-5 hours depending on the season.

(by Shantanu Chatterjee, class 9)

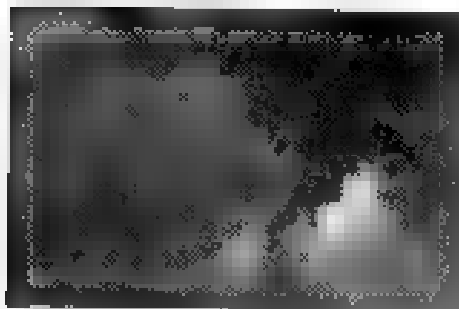
Comparing cooking time with potato



Foldable panel type might also be good choice in India



Lifestyle



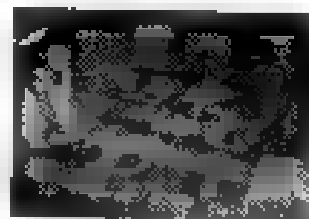
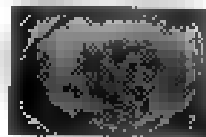
Home-based Project

Let's look at the Seed Packet Project as one example of a home-based project. Though the background of this project was to actually find solutions to some problems I had been facing, it ended up becoming a fun and interesting activity on the whole.

Activity flow

Have a discussion with children about problems that need solving

- Children have a lot of free time at home during their summer vacation. There are many extra seeds that come out of our home garden. I do not have time to clean the seeds by myself. Children want to earn some pocket money.



Make a decision/plan

We decided to make seed packets and sell them.

Planning for implementation of the chosen activity

Start the actual work (production of seed packets)

- Peel seeds out of the pods (cleaning through the seeds)
- Design and produce the seed packets. Prepare instruction notes for each type of seed to be packaged.

Keep a record of your activity-based learning process (using worksheets is a good idea)

The 'seed packets' are ready!

Distribution and sales of seed packet

- make posters
- get feedback from different people
- exchange information with other groups
- earn some pocket money

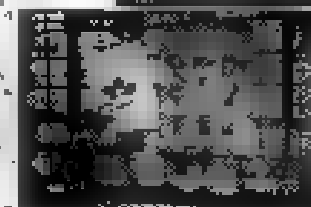
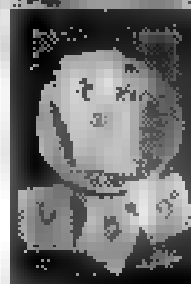
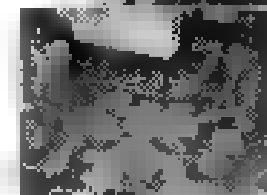
Evaluate the activity with an aim to make improvements

Questions we asked ourselves

- Was this project effective in solving our initial problem(s)?
- Do we want to do this project next season or not?
- Should we increase our seed varieties for next season?
- Are there any new questions regarding the seed packets?

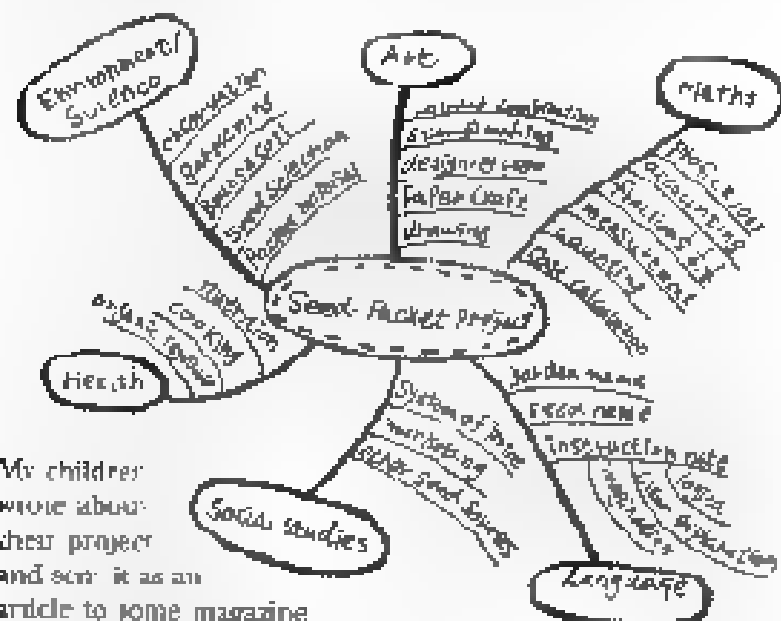


Instruction notes included in the 'seed packet' 'Sweet bean'



Selling seed packets in a Fair. Trade shop, Kulkarni

Through this kind of project, children come to learn many things and they get a chance to practise various skills too. Since this project was done during the children's summer holidays, I prepared some sheets for them as activity based learning. One of the work sheets is shown on p. 125. These can also be a part of our record on the project.



My children wrote about their project and sent it as an article to some magazine.

We started this project during our summer vacation (May-June). We had many bean seeds in our garden. We decided to sell them because we could not plant all the seeds. We could also earn some pocket money.

First we decided our project's name 'Young Bean Garden'. We chose this name because we are young, and we use fresh, young beans for packing. Beans can be grown very easily and produce a big harvest. We also learned from our father that beans are good for soil. We grew two kinds of beans this season, winged bean and sword beans.

We design the seed packets with help from our mom. But we make the packets by ourselves. Sometimes it is very hard to make them. We made some mistakes in the beginning, but we still work everyday on 'Young Bean Garden'. So far we've sold about 20 packets. We hope many people will buy our seeds.

Shantanu, 8 and Anand, 7 Chandermagada, India
(article appeared in Shipping Group's No 13, no 3)

3.6.21

work sheet 1

name: Manasa Choudhary

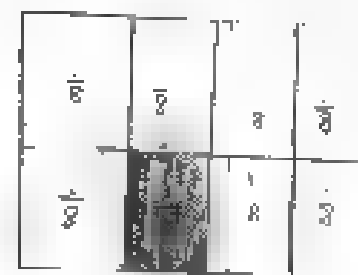
How to make Paper Bag for Seed Packaging

★ what we need (same as diagram)



★ Preparation

Cut 1 sheet of paper into 8 pieces



✓ Please measure a full sheet of paper

length 45cm, breadth 30 cm

✓ how much does a full sheet cost?
Rs. 2

✓ But (this time) did we divide into 8 pieces

✓ Put Glue on a $\frac{1}{8}$ piece of paper

✓ calculate the size of a $\frac{1}{8}$ sheet of paper

✓ measure the actual size of $\frac{1}{8}$ sheet of paper

✓ calculate the cost of a $\frac{1}{8}$ piece of paper

$\frac{1}{8}$ of Rs 2 = RS 1

$\frac{1}{8}$ of Rs 1 = 50 Paise

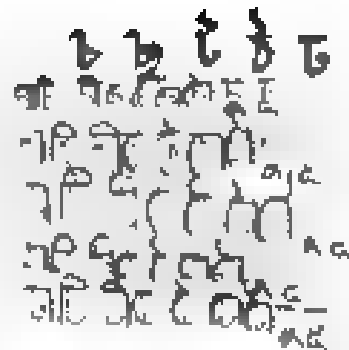
$\frac{1}{8}$ of 50 paise = 25 Paise

(Worksheet 1 filled up by Manasa Choudhary)

Language Learning

My husband played a vital role when our children started learning English and Bengali in their primary school classes 1 and 2. He made various flashcards and taught them the Bengali letters by grouping them according to the shape of the letters, rather than in alphabetical order. The children became independent in both English and Bengali by Classes 3 and 4. I taught them Japanese reading and writing only during the times they had a long school holiday. Though our children are able to communicate in Japanese without any problems, I did not manage to teach them the full complete of Japanese reading and writing systems, as this requires a lot of time—much more than English or Bengali.

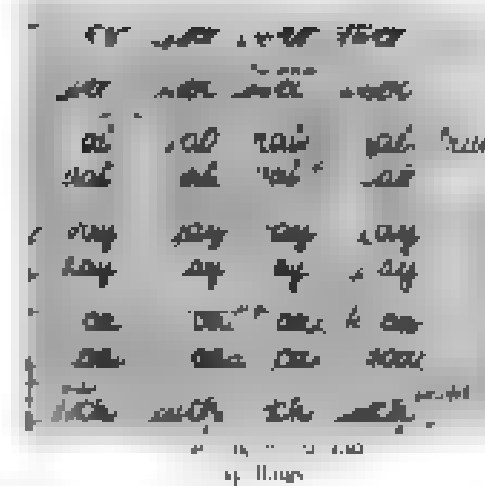
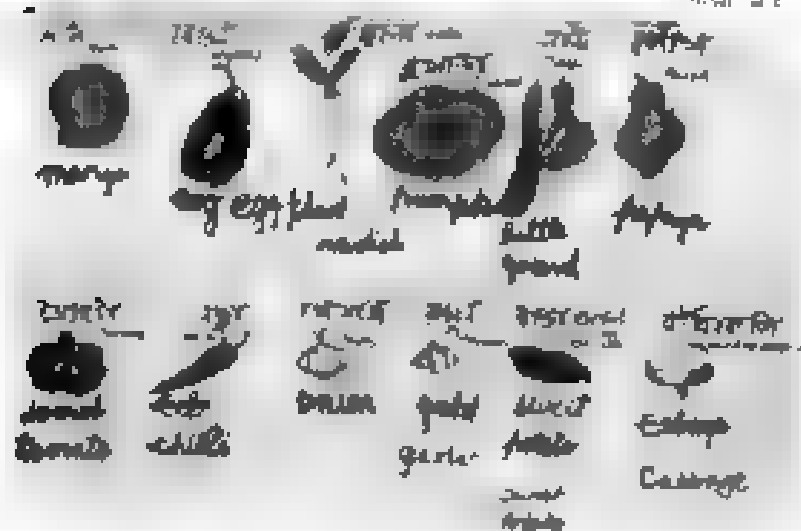
To increase their vocabulary, my husband always taught them words which were related to food and which were a part of their daily life.



The beginning of learning Bengali letters



Learning words related to food



tip to not

tip

top

tot

not

set

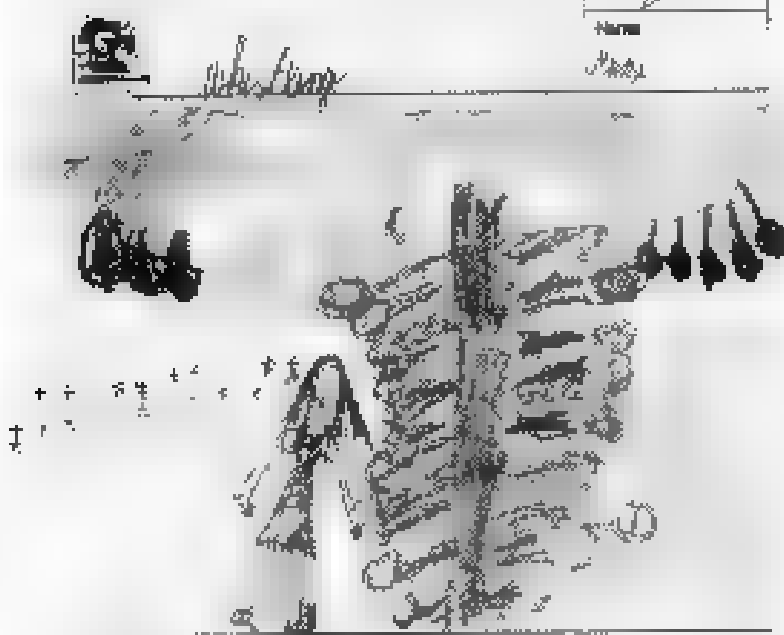
After the children had a good grasp of English, I started preparing "Discovery" and "Experience" sheets to be worked on during their long holidays. Using these sheets as their guide, the children wrote down just about anything—about what they had found or discovered, or anything they had been doing over the holiday period.

I asked the children to fill up the sheet, telling them it was a task, and I gave them a deadline for submission. As long as they met this deadline, they were free to use their holiday time as they liked.

I also asked my husband to look at and check their writing so that he would know what was going on with the children while he was away from home. I didn't give the sheets to them everyday, only once a week while they were on their summer holidays. I felt that it was plenty of work for children of their age to practice writing. You can try these kinds of worksheets with your children. I know you will enjoy when your own children share their wonderful discoveries and special experiences with you in this way.

◇ EXPERIENCE RECORD ◇

What I am doing now.	What I have done.	Date <u>2003.12.25</u>
Name <u>Shanmen</u>		Age <u>5</u>



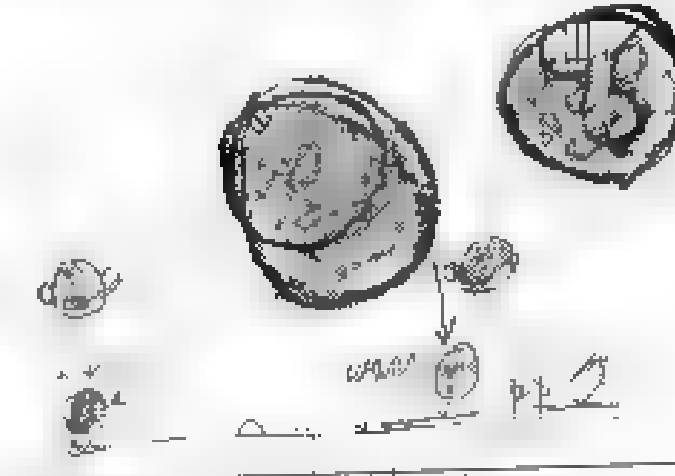
I can whistle like a whistle
When I am five years old I could not
whistle but now I can whistle I am very
good at whistle when I study I can whistle
like a whistle.

I can whistle like a whistle
When I am five years old I could not
whistle but now I can whistle I am very
good at whistle when I study I can whistle

Whistling by Shanmen age 5, 2003.12.25

◇ DISCOVERY RECORD ◇

Where I found it.	Date <u>2003.12.25</u>
Name <u>Shanmen</u>	



I discovered that bubbles bounce
it doesn't bounce when it bounces
if it is all dry horizontally it bounces
sometimes they are colorful

Shanmen age 5

I discovered that bubbles bounce
it doesn't bounce when it bounces
if it is all dry horizontally it bounces
sometimes they are colorful

That bubbles bounce by Shanmen age 5, 2003.12.25

Connecting with Your Surroundings

Gathering local knowledge

When children play outside the neighbourhood, they often get useful knowledge through playmates and elderly members of the community. My children picked up different kinds of information about the medicinal uses of plants or fish found in a pond, etc. Since I was also interested in such information, I asked the children to write down whatever they heard and make pressings of them each time to add to their herbarium collections.

My Friend and the Dekati Pata leaf

Today (16-04-2001 - Monday) my friend Pussy fell down and got a cut. We were playing look and key (in Bengali 'tale chab'). Then suddenly Pussy fell down and cut her leg. It was a little cut but we had to go all the way across the field for *dekati pata*. But we could not find *dekati pata*. Then we went and went till we were at my house. Then my friend said, "can you get some leaf?" I told my mother, then my mother



by Manoni (class 3)

brought two leaves. We put it on Pussy's leg. And we went to Jhimi didi's house and asked if we could get the *dekati pata*. Uncle asked for what we need. A Mamoni told what happened. Then Uncle saw a slight cut but actually it was at the side of the house. Mamoni climbed the gate and took the *dekati pata*. We went and found a place to sit, so we sat there and put it on her leg.



After seeing the plant press made by Manoni, her father explained to her that our real so-called *Dekati pata* usually refers to 'Mexican Daisy' *Tridax procumbens*. Sometimes local people might use the same name for a different plant, depending on the locality and availability. These kinds of findings are also interesting to take note of with children.

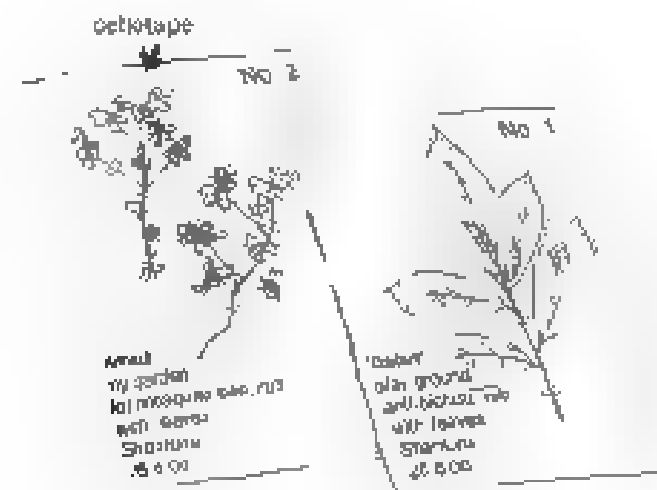
How to make plant press (herbarium)



Place only 2 plants between two news paper which absorb plants moisture. Place down the collecting day, for your memory.

Press newspaper (its + to a pile of books or stone). It can take 2-3 weeks for plant samples to dry out.

Books of wide enough size of the sheets (eg. sketch book)



Small discovery trips

Summer vacations and other long school holidays can sometimes be rather tough for parents managing children, especially when the children are still at the lower and middle primary school level. When we did not have any specific holiday trip planned and also when my husband was not at home during these long vacations, I often organized small cycling or walking excursions with my children – just around our own locality. We called these our “discovery trips.” We visited mango orchards, big ponds, a brick factory, rice fields, etc., places that were all located on the either side of the railway line.

We also did a mapping of our station road. As you probably know, there is a lot of variety among the small shops that line the main roads of small towns in India. Although we often use this main road leading to the station, we were not completely sure what kinds of shops actually exist along it, sometimes it just seems a big hodge-podge. So to satisfy my curiosity, my son (born in Class IV) joined me in the mapping process.

How to do mapping:

You need



pencil



rubber



feet



cap & hat as protection from sun

How to make 'base record'

- (s) sweets 3
- (g) grocery 4
- (c) carpentry 5
- (f) furniture 5
- (m) mills 3
- (p) grocery 3

- (s) pan 2
- (s) flower 3

number of shops

start walk

return

- measure distance by footsteps
- write down shop category
- put different symbols for
 - (s) shop
 - (p) producing unit

walk one side first & keep record, then return for other side recording.

decide each member's role in a group

- 1 measure by step
- 2 describe the shop
- 3 keep record

Our report on Mankundu station road mapping done in November 2001

Mankundu Station Road

(by Green Sprout, Chandernagore)

Mankundu Station is located about 25 km northwest of Howrah Station, on the way to Bandel in Hooghly District. If you get down at the station, you will see the typical scene of a busy station road found in every ordinary small town in West Bengal.

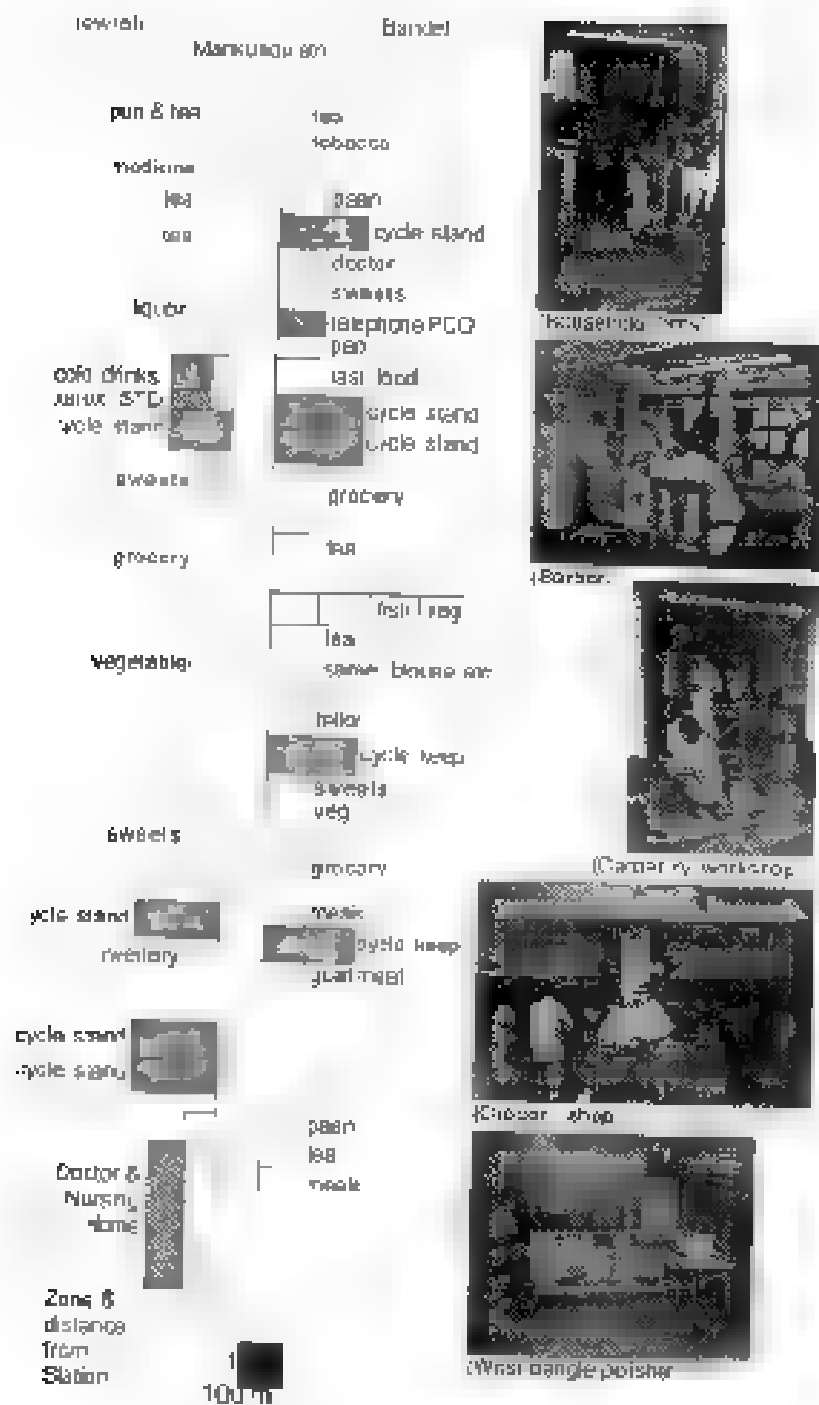
My son (Class IV) and I made a road map of Mankundu Station in November 2001. We wanted to find out what kind of shops are actually located along there. People often say that if you go for marketing on the road you can get everything you need – and we wanted to check if that statement was true.

Through this mapping exercise, we discovered many things (see the following page).

- Shops are stretched till 400-450m from the station. This is an easy walkable distance for shopping.
- Most of the shops have a door size of 3-5 steps (1.5 – 2.5 m); but there are also shops with doors that are only 2 steps.
- All kinds of shops and services are available on the station road.
- We did this mapping in the morning around 11 am. Most shops are closed for a break in the afternoon (between 1-4 pm) and re-open again in the evening.
- We found several small shops that we never knew were there, including a small-scale factory for polishing bangles.
- Cycle stands are located near the station (Zone 1 on the map) for the convenience of commuters.
- A telephone booth (STD, ISD) is located in each zone.
- There are many production units located along this road: carpenters, glass cutting, sweet makers, wheat mills, tailoring, etc. Medicine shops are located in Zones 1, 2, 4. Several doctors' chambers are also located here.
- It is hard to figure out what shops are missing. We could not find a shop selling tools and miscellaneous for pujas. Good quality sarees and clothes are also not available here. We supposed for such things people go to other shopping places in town.

Additional Note

Mankundu Station Road was widened in 2003. At that time, several small, unorganised shops were relocated and a shopping compound was also built. Some shops were renovated and display windows were installed on the front side. From around 2004, PCO email facilities began to be seen as additions to the existing STD shops. A billboard for Digital Camera Printing recently appeared around 2006-2007.



Visiting local artisans with your children and talking to them can also be a pleasant and interesting discovery trip. We visited a local potter who makes *shar* (disposal earthen cups) and other earthen items for our locality. I think sharing documentation from these kinds of day excursions can be very intriguing as I share them here.



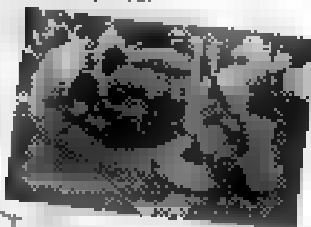
One morning in January, we visited Uncle Ramachandra. His house in Tetulala is located beside the River Hooghly. We heard that there are about 50 pottery houses in this area.

Uncle Ramachandra is a potter. His father and grandfather were also potters. Auntie (his wife) says with her smiling face that he is born from clay.

Uncle Ramachandra turns the pottery wheel round and round. He creates several forms for pots one by one. He is busy now because Saraswati Puja is coming soon.

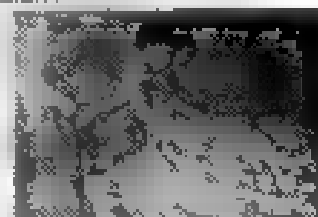
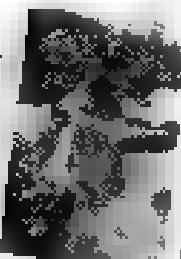
As his hands keep moving busily, he says, "We can't offer pots with plastic items. For marriage ceremonies four special earthen pots are always necessary. People cannot marry without these."

Tea cups are made by Uncle's son-in-law and son. Uncle's 1 year old grandson also helps after school. Though cups made by the grandson are sometimes uneven in shape, he is also a good potter.



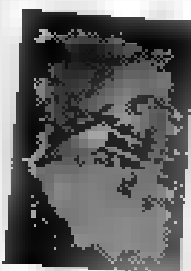
1500-2000 cups are made by them everyday. Cups need to be dried under the sun for one day. Potters who are using 'electric pottery wheels' can produce double this amount.

Mud is brought from the Ganga River beside their house. The river looks dried heavily, it is not possible to do pottery during the rainy season because houses get flooded.

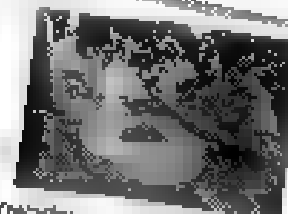
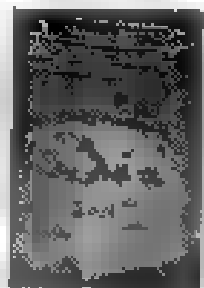


When about 8000 cups are ready, they put them in fire. Every 3-4 days, the potter's oven is set up. Uncle's son and grandson are responsible for setting up the kiln.

In the mountain shaped small kiln (oven) 100 kg cow dung cakes, 40 kg broken coal, 30 kg mango firewood, 10 kg straw is used as fuel. The kiln is again covered with mud.



Total fuel cost is Rs. 30-140 for one kiln. 8000 cups are sold at Rs 550 if the kiln is fired 5 times in a month. They atleast can earn Rs 2200 monthly.



Nowadays sale of earthen cups is going down slowly. They say it might be the effect of plastic cups. 5 years ago 1000 cups sold at Rs 30. Till last year the price of 1000 cups was Rs 60. But after last year's flood, the price rose to Rs 70.

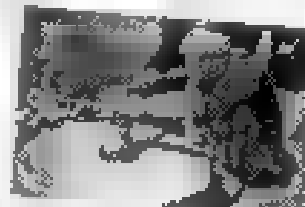


Now plastic cups are cheaper than mud cups. remember a shop keeper saying, 'People buy cheaper things.' We worry about that.

The fire for the kiln is started in the evening and kept going till morning. The oven becomes redder and redder. It looks beautiful and cosy in a winter's night but we can imagine how hard this is in summer.



My neighbours say "our Telavale has been like this since we were born. We feel happy when we drink tea in earthen cups. Plastic cups can never give us this same feeling."



Uncle Ramchandrar even today is working on a pottery wheel. Whenever we see earthen cups we remember Uncle and his family.

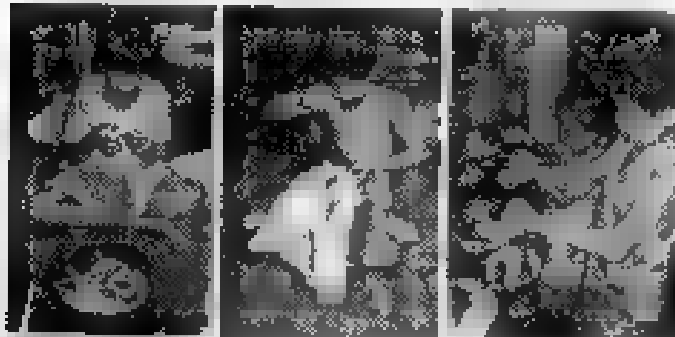
Written by
Srinna Shantana, Women's Challenge

Thanks to
Mr. Ramchandrar Pandi and his family
house, Jangemagore
M. Chankhu Nelli, Pajaluddal shop
Chandemagore.

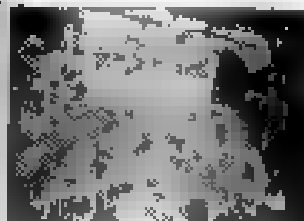
Alternative Recipes

I think one of the subjects missing in formal education here in India is Home Science. If I draw upon my experience of growing up in Japan, I recall that Home Economics and Science is introduced as a school subject which is taught to both girls and boys so that they acquire the basic skills of cooking, sewing, and building simple furniture along with an introduction to consumer education.

This subject is not offered here so I used to teach basic sewing and cooking skills to my children at home. I would have to say that my attempts were not really successful, partly because my children were too young at the time and partly because I am not very good at Home Science myself. In any case, my children are somehow now able to do some simple stitching so they can mend small tears in their pants, etc.



Sewing, washing doll's clothes, cooking - perhaps they were too young to start

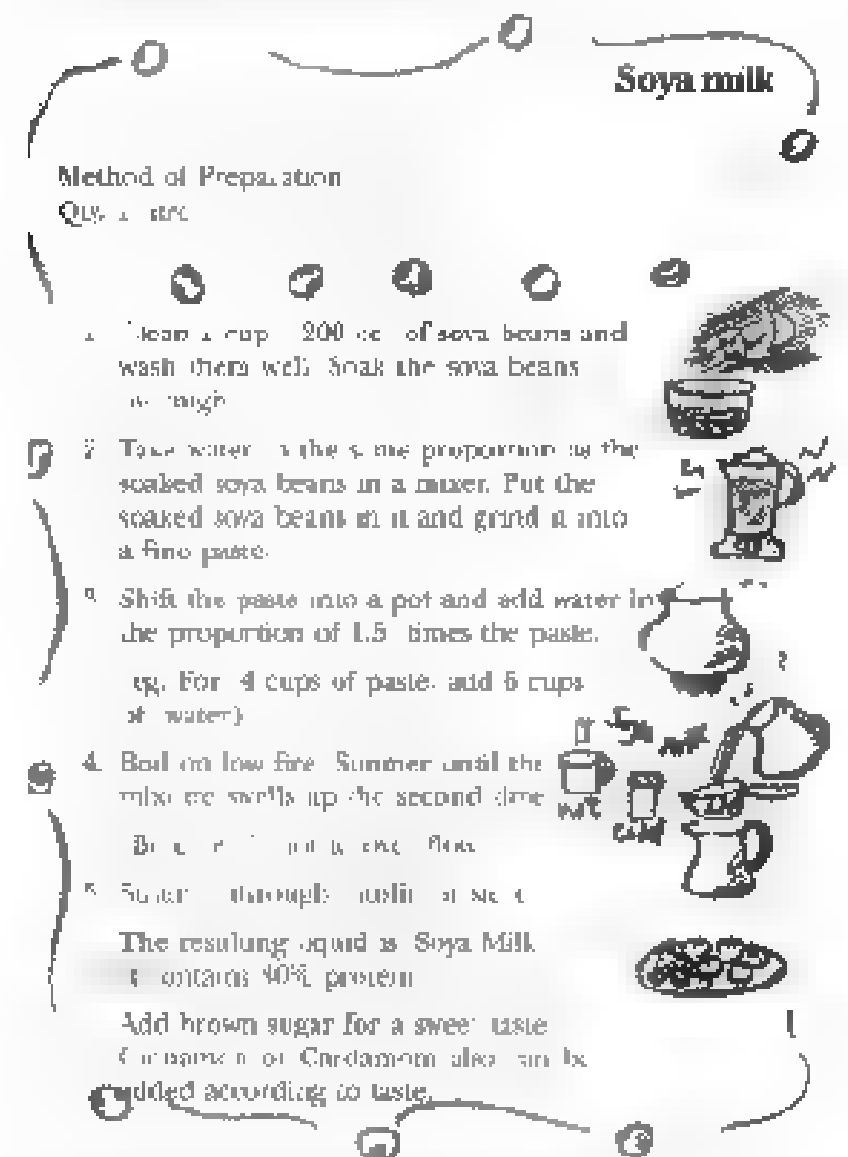


Later when the children reached Class 5 and 7 we tried making simple snacks and drinks

that we called our 'Alternative Recipes'. They were quite good and I would like to share some of them here with you now.

Soya beans - namam high protein

Let's make a diet & nutritious drink from Soya beans



The strained soya residue can be used to prepare 'vada' by mixing it with masala. You'll need 4-5 nos green chilies and spices. Take small scoops of and fry. Serve hot - yumm!!

Roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) is easy to grow in a homegarden (p. 7).

The Roselle fruit has more calcium than most fruits and contains Vitamin C and some iron.



Roselle Jam

Materials: Roselle calyx (petal) 1 kg
Water 5 L
Sugar 1.5-2 kg (same volume as paste of Roselle)

1. Remove Roselle calyx and wash them well
2. Boil Roselle calyx with water
3. After it becomes soft, strain water and mash calyx through a strainer.



4. Put back the mashed calyx in the pot and mix it well with the strained water. (This becomes about 2 kg)

5. Take the mashed calyx mixture (as in 4) and add sugar equal in volume. Boil it again on low heat while stirring constantly.

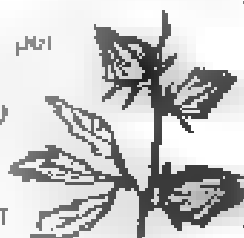
Remove the froth from the surface.

6. Do a Plate Test to make sure the jam is ready.



If the drop of jam taken on a plate does not flow when the plate is tilted, then the jam is ready. The other way to know is by watching bubbles. When the small boiling bubbles become larger and the sound changes from p! p! to pop pop you should know that your jam is ready.

7. Put the jam into a glass jar and allow it to cool. Restore the cap tightly and preserve. Serve with bread, chapati or curd.



During summer, cool kulfi is really rejuvenating. You can have kulfi of different flavours. Try to avoid synthetic flavour and use different seasonal fruits to make delicious kulfi. Here is an idea developed by a 12 year old boy.



Lychee Kulfi

Materials (for 4 small cups / 100- 50cc per cup)

Milk 500 cc, Sugar 3 tsp, Dry Raisin 1 tbsp
Lychee fruits 8-9, Cardamom 2-3 cloves

Method of preparation

1. Take milk in a pot and add sugar, cardamom and raisin. Boil on low flame for 5-6 minutes.
2. Take 4 small cups and add the flesh of two lychees in each cup.
3. Pour the milk 1 equally into each cup. Cool and keep in deep freezer.

Tips: Adding less sugar offers a better taste. You can also use coconut flesh.



Have a nice cool dessert



PART III (Appendix)

Teatime!

Green Sprout presents *Children's Magazine*

● References.

For compiling PART II, I referred to

- *Profile of SELECTED VEGETABLES for home garden in CAMBODIA*. Trainers' training manual. Home garden series No. 2 (Ardhendu, S. CHATTIKYEE, TRC. VC/Cambodia, 997)
- Selections from *Banbanna*. Doublets for activity-based individualized education. ENRE project DRCS:
 - Booklet 1: *Creative Lesson Plan on Trees* (2002)
 - Booklet 2: *Creative Lesson Plan on Insects & Worms* (2003)
 - Booklet 3: *Creative Lesson Plan on Water* (2003)
 - Booklet 4: *Creative Lesson Plan on Medicinal Plants* (2003)
 - Booklet 5: *Creative Lesson Plan on Birds* (2004)
 - Booklet 7: *Creative Lesson Plan on Wasp* (2005)
 - Booklet 8: *Creative Lesson Plan on Vegetables* (2006)
 - Booklet 9: *Creative Lesson Plan on Local Market* (2008)

The appendix has been included here for you to have a look at over tea or hot cocoa, or a refreshment of your choice. It isn't really meant to be 'the end' of the book, but rather something to flip through when you need a refresher and some light inspiration.

Green Sprout Loves Teatime

Issues of Children's Magazine were prepared during 2002-2005 when my children were age 9 and 1.

Among the various topics, which generally include natural resources and other such subjects, there is a special issue on Auroville. Auroville is located in southern India in the state of Tamil Nadu. Both my children were born there. The special issue was written when we briefly returned to visit the community after a long absence.

Green Sprout thanks friends who contributed articles and answered our news for this magazine.

Manasi, who was the proud editor of Children's Magazine is now a teenager of 15 years old. Whenever she reads over their magazines, she actually bursts into laughter saying, "I was so small!" Did I really write such stupid things? Embarrassing but still so funny."

Please take some time to have a look at the following pages from our magazine over your favourite drink or a cool bit of kaffir. Everybody loves teatime.

Hi, our
editor Manasi of
this Children's Magazine.
Both myself and my elder
brother, Shantanu, had great
fun preparing each issue.
I hope you will enjoy the
Children's Magazine
series prepared by
Green Sprout.



Children's Magazine Tree August 2002 (cover)

Save The Earth!
It is suffering from
Pollution!

CONTENTS

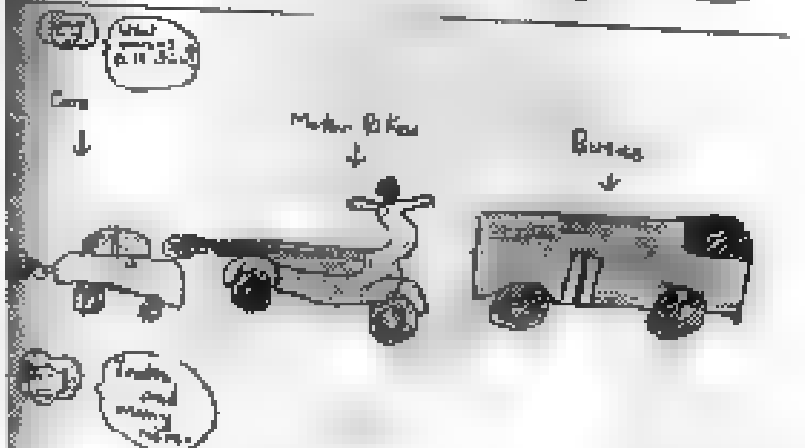
- Pg. 1 Jokes for you (3 jokes)
 What causes pollution?
 Don't chop down trees!
- Pg. 2 FEATURE OF TREES
 A Row of trees
- Pg. 4 Greeting from trees
- Pg. 8 Golf with trees
 and getting football money
- Pg. 9 INTERVIEW "What's your favourite tree?"

Publisher: Green Sprout
 Editor: Mandy Chatterjee
 Contributor: Mandy Chatterjee
 & others

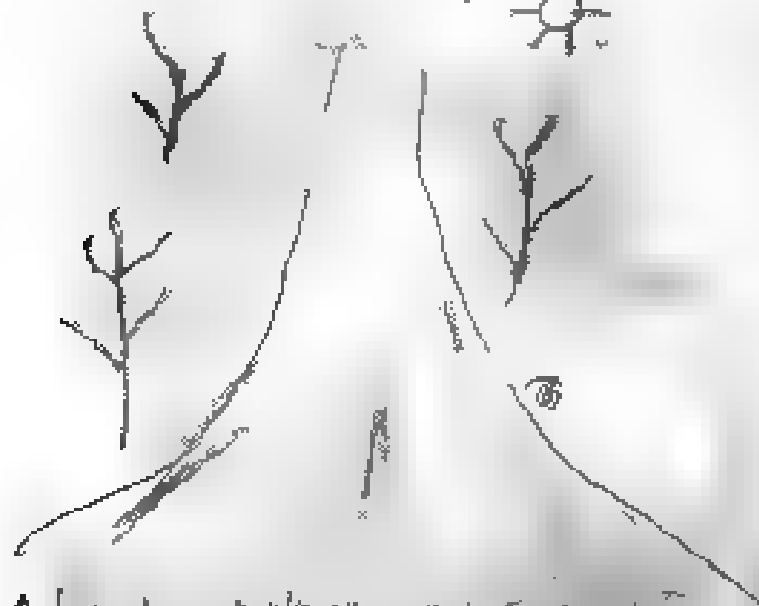
AD LBS AN RE 3D 7C.

Jokes

One day a panda came in a restaurant.
 The panda ordered a cheese sandwich.
 He ate the sandwich and kept the waiter.
 The manager came running.
 He asked, "Why did you steal my waiter and not pay the bill?"
 The Panda said, "Look up Panda in the dictionary."
 The manager looked and read:
 Panda - Eat plants and leaves.



2 you chop down trees and never plant any the future will be like THIS!



And you have to live with without fresh air!

Those who get born when there are no trees they won't even know what is a tree

3 Point

The trees are here and there all scattered everywhere. They give us fresh to breathe.

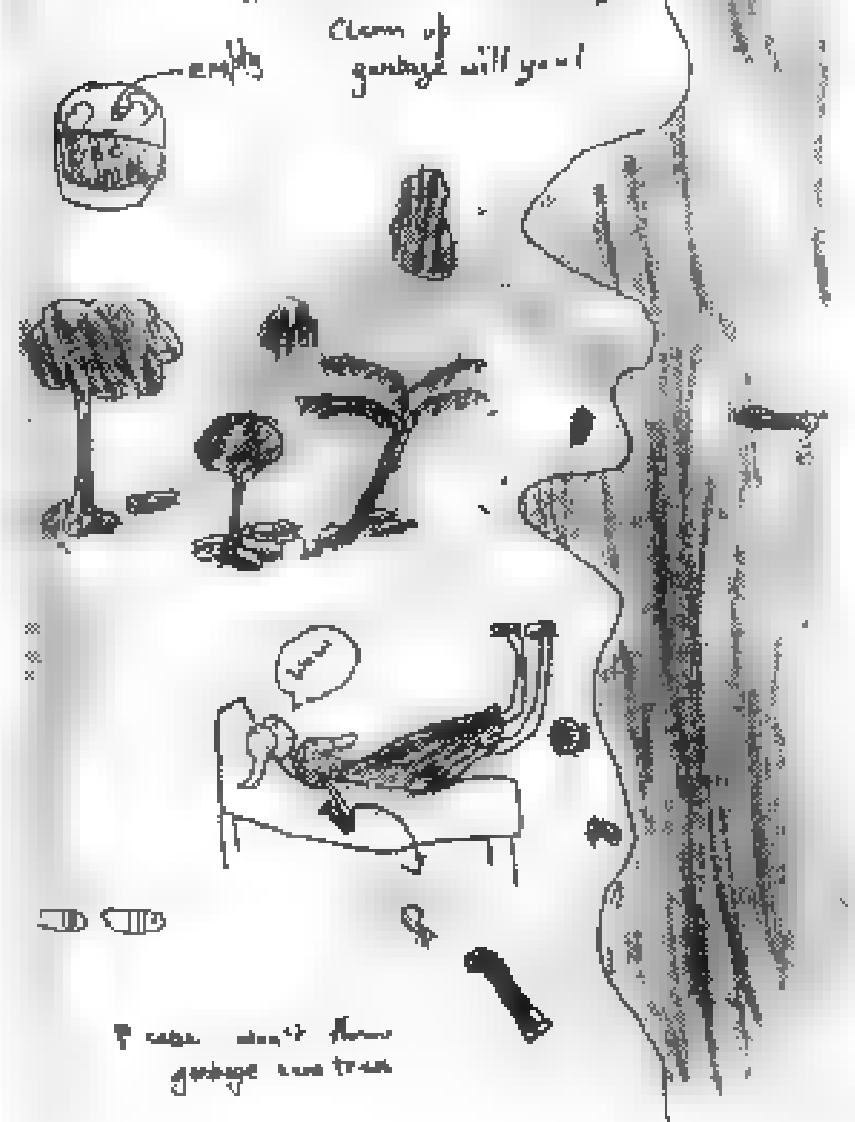
Don't CHOP DOWN TREES

PLEASE PLANT THEM

We want them with all our heart please don't cut them down who are born in the next century won't even know what is a

TREE!

4 I like going to mountains, deep woods, well, going vacations with a lot of trees and some don't have them? We'll have garbage everywhere like this

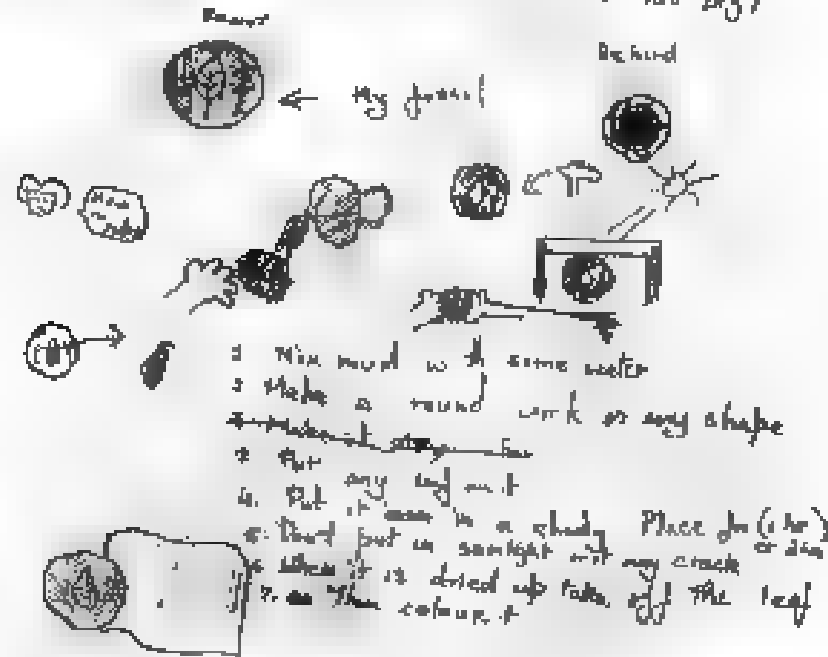


I can't don't throw garbage everywhere

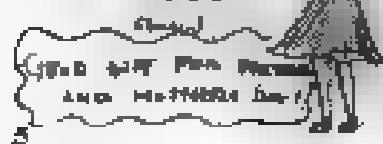
GRAFT

LEAF FOSIL

 **How you need** Mud, water & leaf (any kind of leaf but not too big)



OR you can
keep it as
decoration or
paper weight
or necklace



AND

You can
sell it
also!



You can also Pocket Money

INTERVIEW



Ques Chatterjee I like Bahama tree



I like it because the flower is beautiful and like leaf's shape, they easy to grow

Indira Chatterjee - I like Bangor tree
like it because it gives comfort and it's fun to climb

Indira Chatterjee - Mango tree
like it because I like mangoes and the leaves are beautiful

Spari Das - I like roshni Ghra
like it because its flowers are beautiful and it gives nice shade

Shreya Bhattacharya - I like banana
like it because it's good for health

Rita Ghosh - I like mango
like it because mango is my favorite fruit and the smell is good

Mahabika S - I like tree (Candana)
I like it since it looks good

Shubhika Banerjee
I like it because it has good flowers and scents

Suyarna Ghosh - Mango
I like it because mango is good and it gives shade

Shubhika Ghosh - Mango
I like it because mango is my favorite fruit

Conclusion

Mango is the most popular and favourite tree



Watch out for the
next edition of
Children's Magazine
Thank you for reading

Have fun
next month

Love



Bye

Manosi

Chatterjee

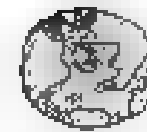


Barakat Gate, Garia Dhara West,
Chandernagore 712 36 West-Bengal
6834685

We welcome your suggestions and articles
We will see your name on the book

Manosi

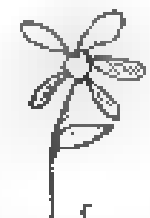
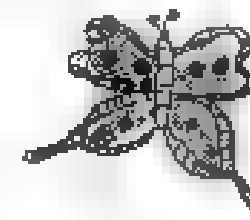
♥ Thank
you



CHILDRENS' MAGAZINE




INSECTS



GREEN SPROUT





Save your well pop the ants will eat them up

Content

Tales for you

Reel of bugs By SHANTONU 1

dragging ants By Manasa 2

Garage ① (Find out the given Differences) & 4

② End the insect in the sentences

special By Manasa & Shantonu

For just 3 correct entries. An

GREEN SPROUT

Let your name be the winner

Bag

NAME

With 12's only

Must be written

Insect Awards

Craft

Message Bag - → Green Sprout

Interview Service Center Staff

Publisher: Green Sprout

Editor: Manasa Chatterjee

Illustrator: Manasa Chatterjee

Writer: Shantonu and Manasa Chatterjee

TO KILL

One day a cricket was flying home. Suddenly it began to snow. The poor cricket froze and fell to the ground. After sometime a bull came and sat on it. The cricket felt warm and started to sing. A hand heard it singing and picked it up.

Moral

Anyone who hates you in shit may not necessarily be an enemy. Anyone who takes you out of shit may not necessarily be a friend.

If you fall in shit keep your mouth SHUT!



You can see bugs here and there.

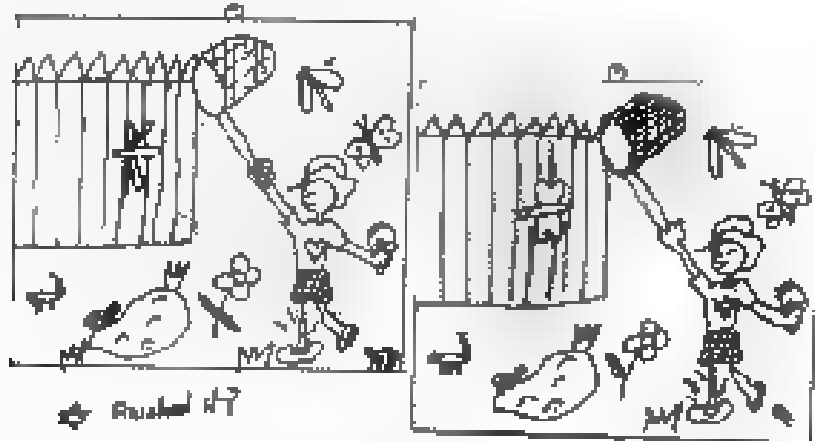
There are bugs in trees and bugs in leaves, shiny bugs, sticky bugs all in the trees, leaves & flowers. Weechen such blood-sucking bugs but I have no bugs at all. Then our world wouldn't be.

COMPLETE!



GAMES

- 1 Find out the differences in this picture below.
(Answer in next issue) good luck! in your wisdom.



★ Finished it?

- 2 Find the verbs in the sentences. There may be a few words in between. (answers in next issue)

- 1 My mother made chicken curry
- 2 Moss doesn't grow in shade
- 3 The guest ate the soup
- 4 The cat got mad after eating that helpless cow
- 5 The cock approached me with cautiousness
- 6 They water feed from beside that pillar
- 7 I was caught spray painting the school walls
- 8 I dropped the salt on the mouse

- by Shantanu Chatterjee

INTERVIEW

What is your favorite insect?

- 1 Manasa Chatterjee - Beetle
Reason - I like it because it is strong & not weak
- 2 Suparna Basu - Butterfly
Reason - because it is beautiful & colorful
- 3 Mayukh Mukherjee - Ant
Reason - because I find them to be very organized
- 4 Pratik Chakrabarti - Honey Bee
Reason - It causes pollination and therefore helps in plant propagation. It also collects nectar which we can drink. It is a very happy job!
- 5 Anirudh Chatterjee - Honey Bee
Reason - they give us honey
- 6 Anika Dutta - Butterfly
Reason - looks nice close? & it's friendly doesn't hurt
- 7 Sanjita Mukherjee - Green Litter
Reason - looks good the colour is also nice. It is not harmful.
- 8 Ananya Kundu - Butterfly
Reason - Because it is very colorful and soft. It is also produced.
- 9 Subroto Kundu - Honey Bee
Reason - they do Pollination's produce honey & even for us.
- 10 Anshuman Sekhar Chatterjee - Dragonfly
Reason - I like it because it is beautiful and it's a friend of the farmers. It eats harmful insects. It has many bright colors.
- 11 Vikash Ant
Reason - I like to watch their movement. They are very intelligent.



Did you like the Magazine? and
did you enjoy Reading and enjoy
playing on it?

- * To work or study working you already be a
Does work make you "Bored" or your work?
Then buy the August issue which is joyful, full
colourful, exciting and informative and available

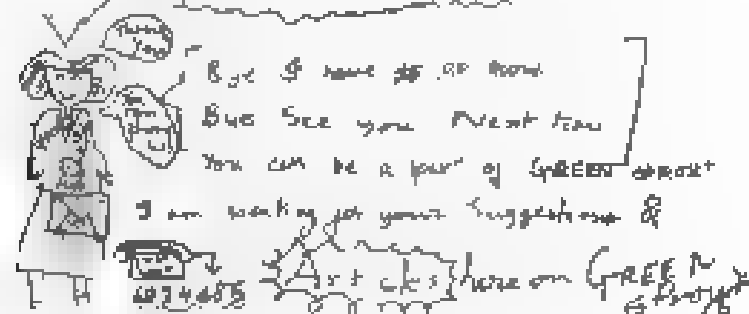


* August issue "Tree"

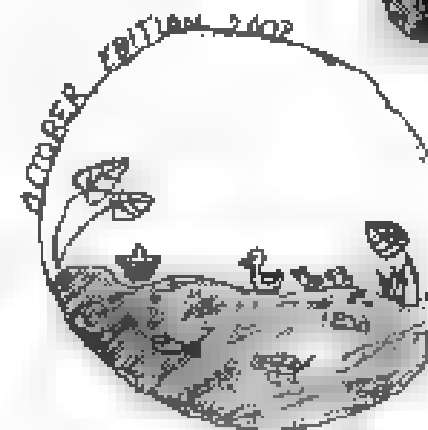
- * To work "Bugging" you?
- * Do you feel as angry as "Wasp"?
- * Then buy the September issue which is available



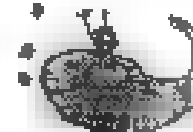
September issue "Wasp"



CHILDRENS' MAGAZINE










WATER






GREEN

SPROUT



























Save THE Water!  Contents  THE fishes     

Games ① Match the shells  
② Name the river 

Games ① Match the shells
② Name the river

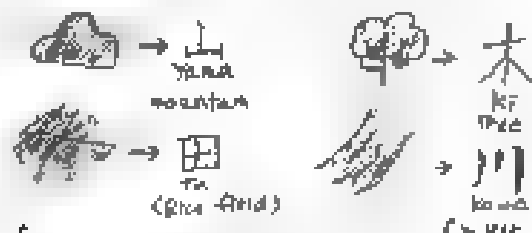
By Shantoku, Pg
By Shantoku, Pg
By Saito and Mami, Pg 2
By Mami, Pg 3
By Shantoku, Pg 3

Special Page

lucky Draw!                        

~ Japanese KANJI about Stream ~

Japanese KANJI has very interesting pictorial history. Some basic KANJI letters symbolize the original objects like this:



The letter of river symbolizes a stream and water. Another water-related object comes from the character of 水 (water, like splash, descent to 水), and other parts of a river.

Here I show you some examples —

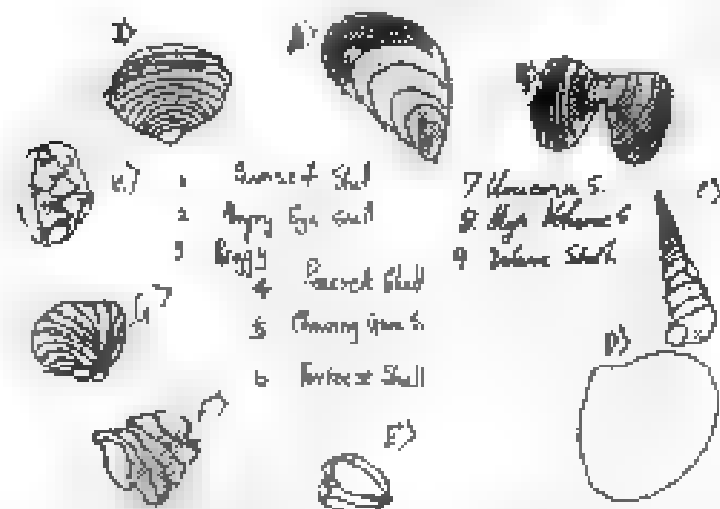


So you can realize 'water stream' comes from your eyes when you feel sad or pain and when you feel extremely happy or something is very very funny!



GAMES

Everybody I want to keep back in you. Then I collected many shells, and I named them also. Can you name THEM? Let's try!



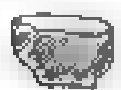
Find the river in the sentence. There may be words in English in the Japanese text or a river in the picture.

- ① Kame is a god whose son makes some human food.
- ② I want to be a racing dog alone.
- ③ His father likes swimming.
- ④ He and my sister are the first King Kong.
- ⑤ The game is easy to play.
- ⑥ His hamburger is sitting a cup of tea.
- ⑦ We can make every thing from water such as human and cake.

Crafts

Things you need: Fine knife, waste bin or container with (blue), rusty saute paper and sea shells.

For the Dish



find just the size you want, stick the sea shells



You can use the Dish for making seeds or small scale of gods or goddesses or your treasure

2 For tin



find just the size you want, stick the sea shells



You can use the tin for making small stand or for making treasure

The animal we may in Goa were



Dingo the Dog



Whisker



Murci



Amby j



Somachy



Fraggy



Kic



Barma



Carra (S)



Arty



Flider



Crowd



Turkey



Arty



Plume



Sunbird

④

Special: (CULTURE)

Durga Puja

"Durga Puja, the festival of Bengalis is the worship of 'Shakti' or the divine power"



How much do you know about the Durgas weapons?

Ques

- 1) Ashura
- 2) Shiva
- 3) Varaha
- 4) Anur
- 5) Surya
- 6) Yama
- 7) Indra
- 8) Vishnu
- 9) Shiva



- a) Chakra
- b) conchshell
- c) Anus
- d) garland of snakes
- e) Trident
- f) Discus
- g) Thunderbolt
- h) flaming discus
- i) Bow
- j) Iron rod



Turn the page upside down for answers

7 = 01, 8 = 06, 9 = 02, 10 = 09, 11 = 04, 12 = 05, 13 = 03, 14 = 08, 15 = 07, 16 = 01, 17 = 06, 18 = 02, 19 = 09, 20 = 04, 21 = 05, 22 = 03, 23 = 08, 24 = 07, 25 = 01, 26 = 06, 27 = 02, 28 = 09, 29 = 04, 30 = 05, 31 = 03, 32 = 08, 33 = 07, 34 = 01, 35 = 06, 36 = 02, 37 = 09, 38 = 04, 39 = 05, 40 = 03, 41 = 08, 42 = 07, 43 = 01, 44 = 06, 45 = 02, 46 = 09, 47 = 04, 48 = 05, 49 = 03, 50 = 08, 51 = 07, 52 = 01, 53 = 06, 54 = 02, 55 = 09, 56 = 04, 57 = 05, 58 = 03, 59 = 08, 60 = 07, 61 = 01, 62 = 06, 63 = 02, 64 = 09, 65 = 04, 66 = 05, 67 = 03, 68 = 08, 69 = 07, 70 = 01, 71 = 06, 72 = 02, 73 = 09, 74 = 04, 75 = 05, 76 = 03, 77 = 08, 78 = 07, 79 = 01, 80 = 06, 81 = 02, 82 = 09, 83 = 04, 84 = 05, 85 = 03, 86 = 08, 87 = 07, 88 = 01, 89 = 06, 90 = 02, 91 = 09, 92 = 04, 93 = 05, 94 = 03, 95 = 08, 96 = 07, 97 = 01, 98 = 06, 99 = 02, 100 = 09, 101 = 04, 102 = 05, 103 = 03, 104 = 08, 105 = 07, 106 = 01, 107 = 06, 108 = 02, 109 = 09, 110 = 04, 111 = 05, 112 = 03, 113 = 08, 114 = 07, 115 = 01, 116 = 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Hi! Did you have fun for those Pigeon Holidays?
Well I had as much fun I can't forget each
day of the holidays. But you like these Holidays
and did you enjoy Reading and enjoy
playing in it?
November Issue is BIRDS

Here is an opportunity to be a part of this Magazine
You can send us your Articles here on Green Sprout!
You can also phone us Here is our Phone number

0834685

No 2
with
magazine
and
beetle
collection
with a
chrome

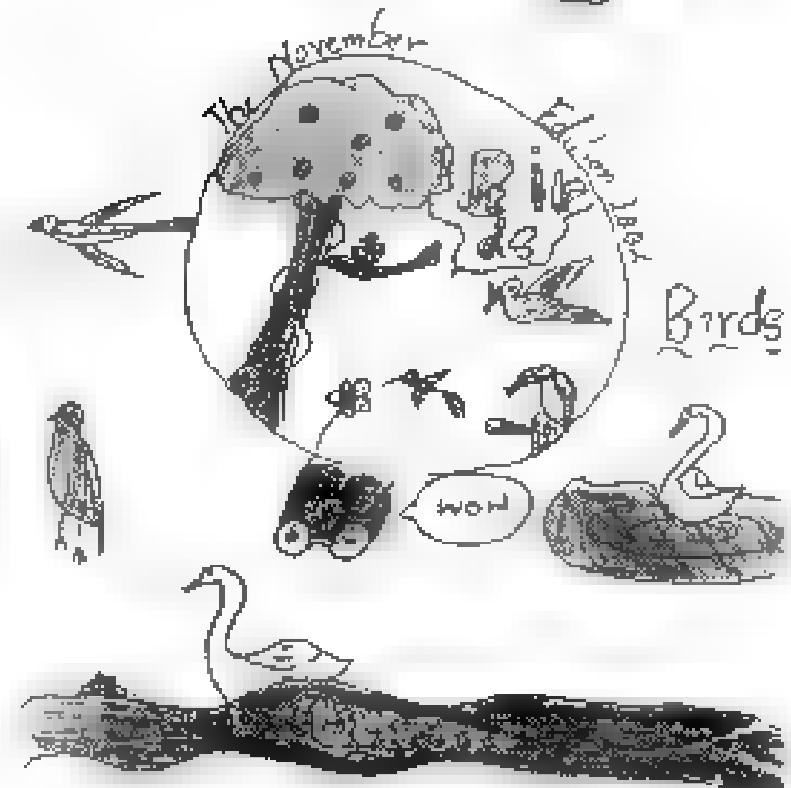
The Winters
1st Robin Chatterbox
2nd Superstar Kitten

Mr. Buttering
One day
Shin Shin
No Shin
One grass growing
found them 3 smaller
I hope does not have
much heads of Not smaller

HELLO

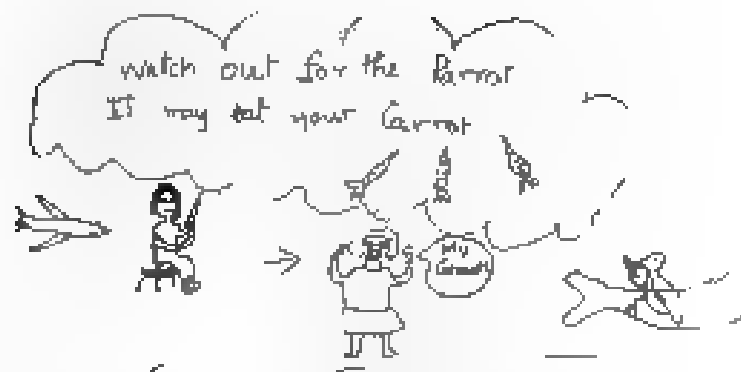
Happy
Pigeon
Pigeon

CHILDREN'S MAGAZINE



Green Sprout

I am
going
to
be
a
bird
watcher
one
day



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| 2 | A girl named Pakhi (25) | (Pakhi means love in Hindi) | con |
| 2 | Water essay | | Pg 2 |
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Publisher: Green Group

Twitter - @jamesmccormack

Illustrations: Sharpton, & Mowbray

withers Shantome, Satoko & Haruo

More Fun Reading

Takes for you



There was an owner of a point but used it
to say bad things to everyone. In the morn-
ing a red string was on his foot and a blue one
on the other foot. If he pulled the red string the
point would say 'Radha' if he pulled the blue string the
point would say 'Krishna'. Then one day the owner
went into his house to prepare his work. After a
short while a power boy came by and when he
saw the blue and the red strings he became curious
and pulled the red string the point said 'Radha'
and then pulled the blue string and said 'Krishna'.
The power boy was pleased and then thought 'If
I pull the strings together it will say 'Radha'.

Sometimes he thinks that he pulled both
 the strings at the same time and the point ~~is~~ L.
 said "his double" & will down in ^{the} ~~the~~

2000



Q. What a nice named Patsy and her real name is Patsy.
A. That's her in fact we became good friends and
she got an outside to Green Street! This is our great
outside! Thank you Patsy.
Q. What Patsy has a cat? Is it a dog named Bingo & I
Teresa named Ad Tap Tap?

She works on Friday and a piece of art on the 6th

See Next Page

Parker also has
to cross a river

by a ferry boat to reach to strava, to go to the market and at  strava  to go to the



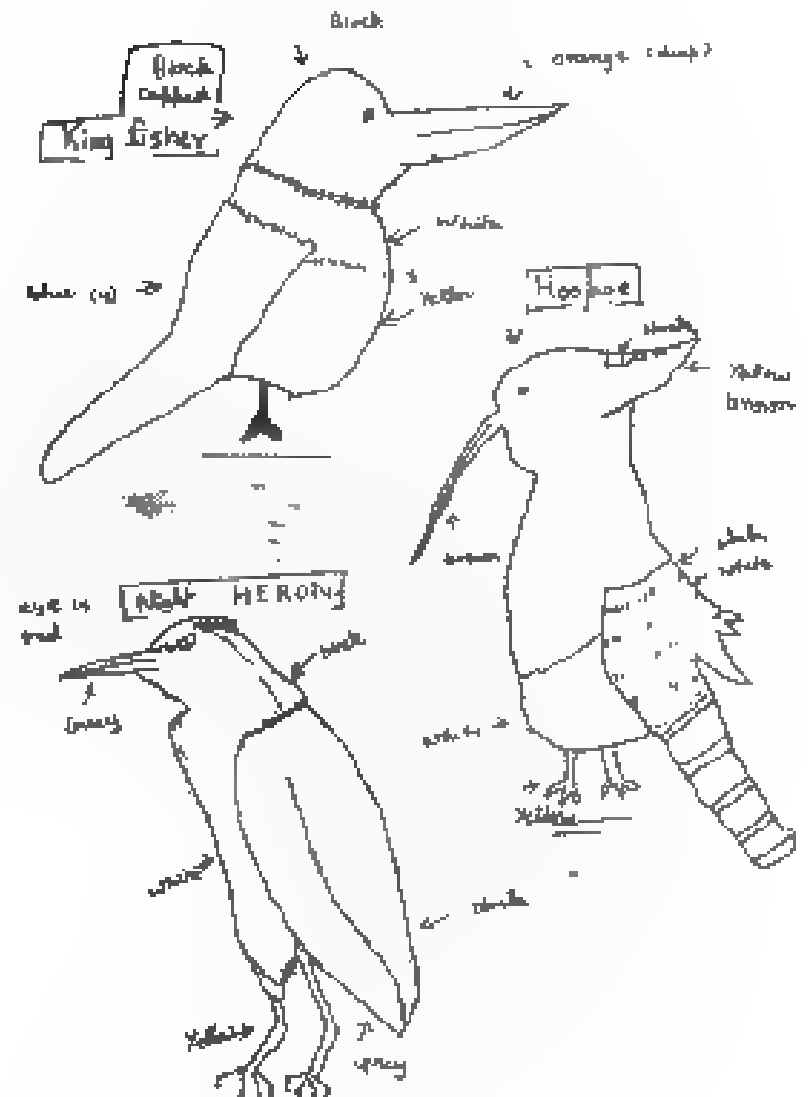
Water essay

by Rishi

I went in a ferry boat and I saw a crocodile. It was a baby but it was very big and it was very beautiful. He went right on top of the ferry boat to see the crocodile. He goes every day to school. We have to go on the ferry boat to go to the other side of the river. He can see people in fishing boats they catch fish, crabs and crabs. Egypt's city and go to their nests. Water is important for shipping in the water. Blue swallows fly in the sky and clouds. Kingfishers go very close to the water then dive in for fish. They are all very colorful. Barges come out of the river. Water snakes go fast on the water and eagles fly around the river. Water is every thing looks.

A poem of water by Rishi

Water is beautiful it is blue green and transparent. Don't go where it is. All the birds, just near will go away. I love the water and I love the sea. She is like a shiny like a diamond sea.

Coloring book


Did you know?

1} Did you know the Indian called Kingfisher eats fish & crabs
 Its call is Kii Ki - Ki.

2} Did you know the Hoopoe eats insects, Grubs and pupae?
 Its call is hoo po - hoo po ho

3} Did you know the Night Heron eats Insects, frogs and Grubs.
 Its call is waku.

Let's books for Bird watching



the book of Indian Birds
 By Salim Ali
 (Published by Bombay Natural History Society)
 Rs 95/-

My Native Garden
 Book of BIRDS
 By Ruvini Lal
 (Published by Tisha Books)
 Rs 12/-

Birds from my window
 (Published by Tisha Books)
 Rs 100/-

Green Sprout
 10 Pages
 Rs 10/-

⑧

Interview with Editor of Green Sprout

Q Why did you start Children's Magazine?

A I see my school magazine and thought I could also make a magazine not only for children but for adults too.

Q Do you enjoy the work of the editor?

A Yes, I enjoy the work because I am an "EDITOR". I am like a J.K. Rowling.

Q What is J.K. Rowling? He is very rich now. How about you?

A I have about 145 rupees.

Q Oh! So much! Do you get this by selling magazines?

A Not. About some of the money came from helping my mother and some from selling home-grown seeds.

Q What is the most difficult part of editing?

A Thinking about what to write and arranging articles and then colouring.

Q Does everybody like your magazine?

A I'm not so sure.

Q What kind of poems can we readers expect?

A Rap poems, haiku, haikus, couplets etc. with Green Sprout logo.

Q Can you recommend some books for children?

A Harry Potter for 8-10th class, Tisha's Adventure to the 100th Emperor.
 It's about a baby writer's adventure.

Q How long are you going to continue this magazine?

A I don't know exactly. I think maybe till I get a teenager 3-4 years.

Q What is your message to readers?

A I hope you will like the magazine and contribute your articles to Green Sprout. And may I ask, "what do you like your magazine?"



⑤



Did you enjoy this edition? And have you
tried to make your own bird factory?
To make it put on me some sticks in any colour
paper and watch birds in your garden or
when you leave from place to place



★ Next edition is Energy (New Power)

★ Including Christmas songs
No No Merry Christmas

The Answer for October issue's Quiz

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Sunset Sky Ans E | 5. Chasing You Ans E |
| 2. Angry Eye Ans B | 6. Teeth set Ans F |
| 3. Biggy Ans D | 7. Antenna Ans C |
| 4. Research Sheet Ans A | 8. High Kick Ans H |
9. Name Q1. Ans G

2. Blay rahi
2. Jodhavi
3. Nandini
4. Minami

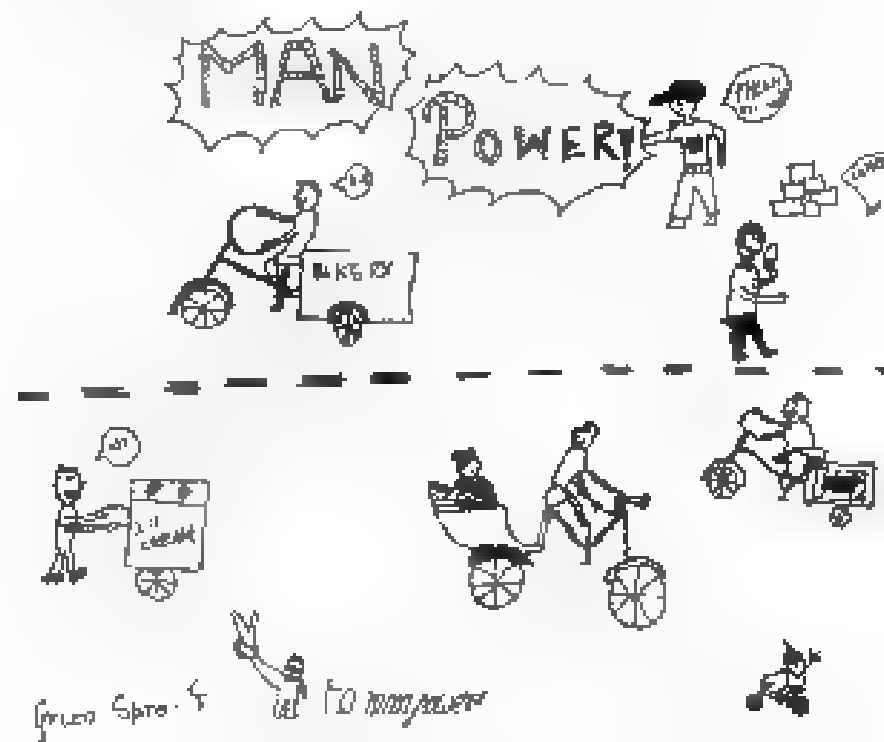
5. Making
Thermal
Nandini
Yamuna

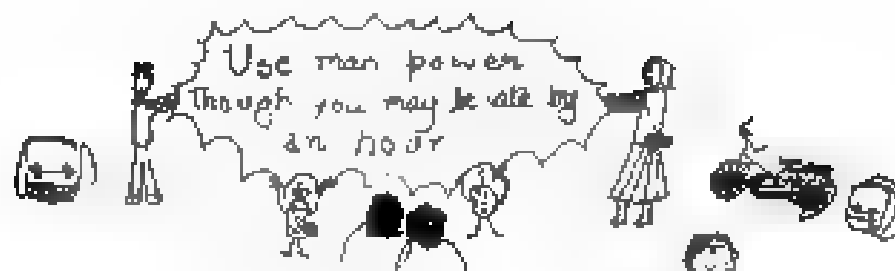
Paroma Das Gupta
entry you were

the only one to
give us an entry
so we gave you
a PRIZE



Thank you for your
entry
signature





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Jokes 99 ? x Swator Pg

Essay By Manas Pg 2

Picture game 'Watch the following' . . . Pg 3

Do you have the power Pg 6

Colour me 'women's Power' . . . Pg 5

Message bag - Green Sprout . . . Pg 6



JOKES



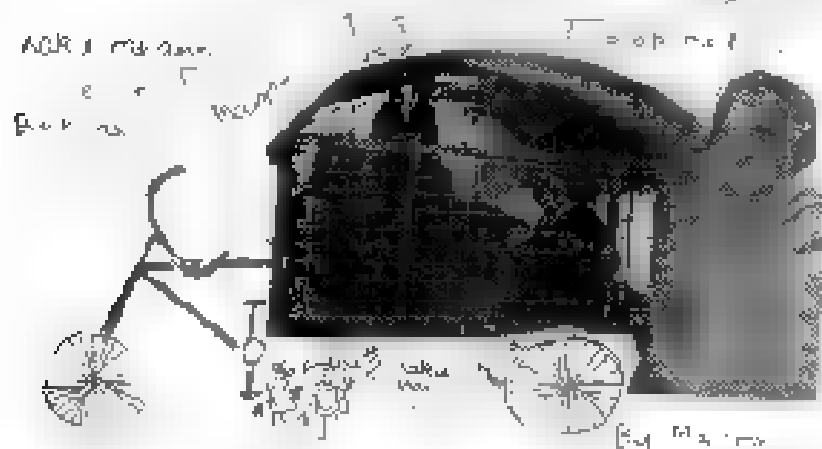
One day Green Sprout G.S. was invited to the opening of the Syamagar Jute mill farm which was on the other side of the river. When he reached the river he only saw a boy (Landrup 15) nearby. He asked whether the boy would take him across the river or not. The boy replied "yes". At that time some dark clouds had gathered in the sky. After a few minutes G.S. asked the boy "Do you have a magazine named after you?" The boy replied "No". G.S. said, "How cheap, half your time is wasted". Next he asked, "Have at least read my magazine". The boy replied "No". G.S. said "If 1/4 of your time is wasted". By that time a storm had sprung up. Now the boy asked G.S., "Do you know how to swim?" G.S. replied "No". The boy said, "1/4 of your time is wasted". Saying this the boy jumped out and swam ashore just as the boat turned over. Luckily, as G.S. was a boy he floated to shore after 1 hour. G.S. returned home that day a richer and humbler boy. After he told his story to Manasi and Shantosh he told them what he learnt. "This is what he said. "Knowledge and physical power must be combined to be successful in life." Do you agree?"



1. A. K. A. ... R ...
 K ... ER ...

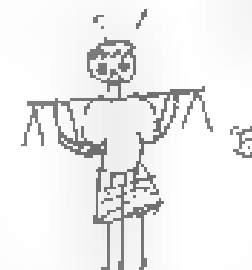
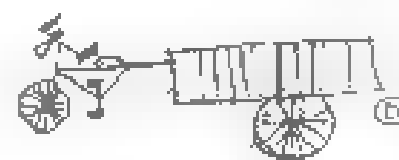
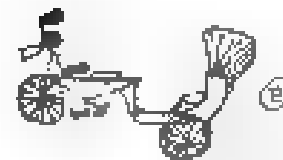
When rain is the ... of my ...
 an ... I go to ... with ...
 in with my ...
 but sometimes he ...
 hold on in ...
 van ... we have to ...
 to ...
 not ...
 as a ...
 to see ...
 as on the ...

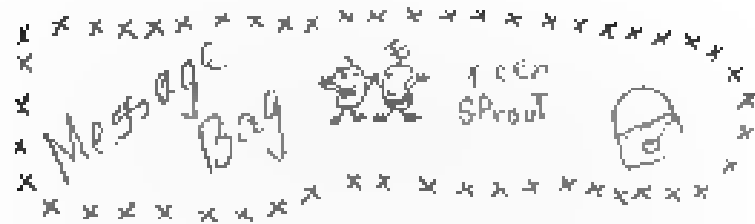
F H M ...
 ...



Picture Game

Match the following





- Did you enjoy our Magazine of 'Man Power'?
- We are sorry that this issue took a long time to be made. Next issue is 'Our trip to Auroville'.

- Meanwhile Green Sprout found a girlfriend - Pea Sprout. She loves Sports & Peace.
- Prize for 'Faster the following' will be a free Edition of 'Our trip to Auroville' signed by Kanae Kakei.
- Back ^{is also} available & MY NATURE GARDEN BOOK OF BIRDS.

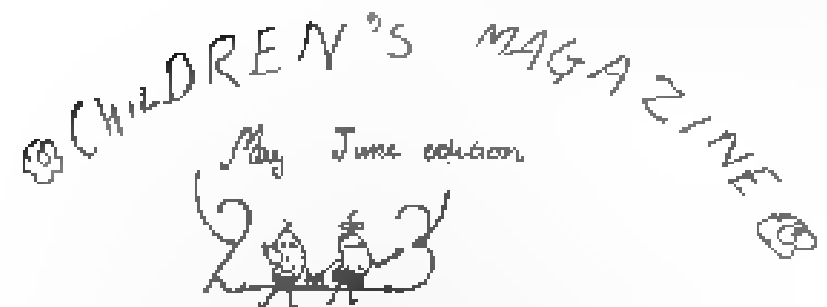


My Search



We are waiting for your articles!

Green Sprout
 Babasat Gate, Gero Dhar West
 Chandernagore - 712136 W.B.
 Phone 926454685 Email emne_sc@usa.net



Our Visit to Auroville



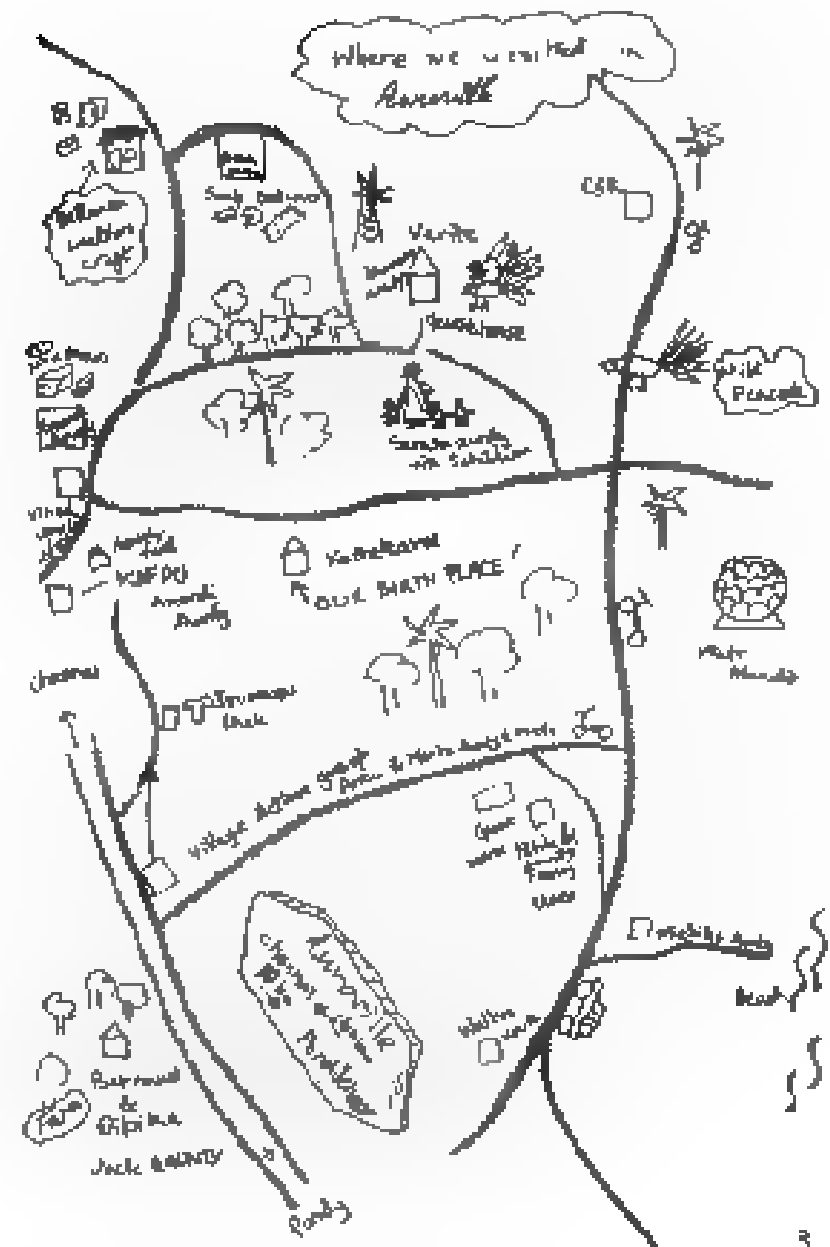
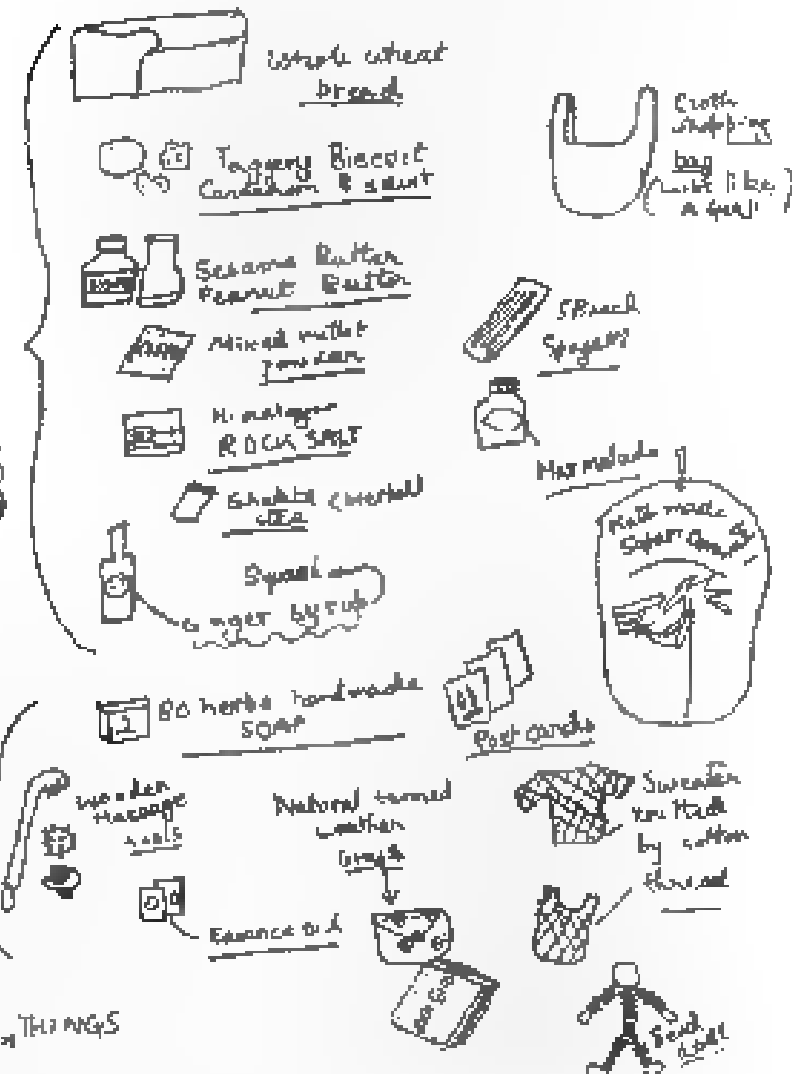
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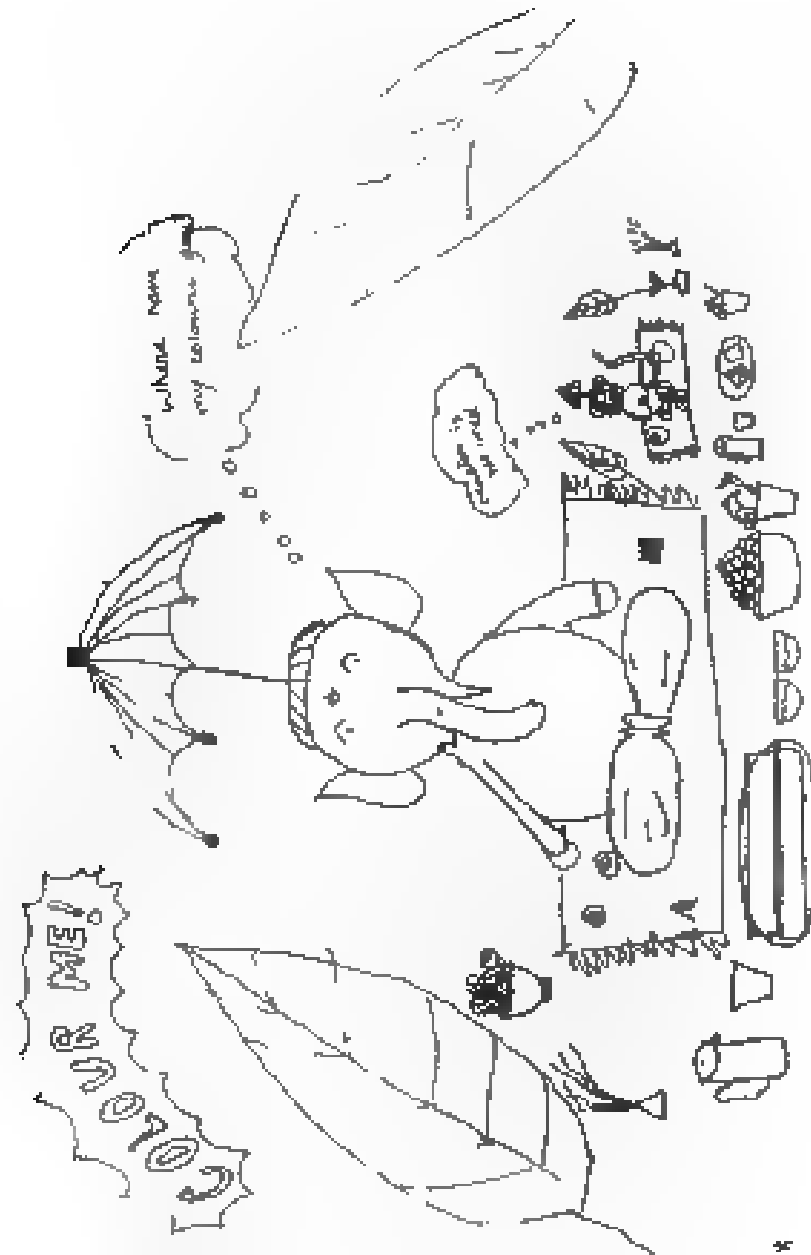
GREEN SPROUT.

THINGS GIFTED AND BOUGHT
IN AROVILLE

Healthy Food

Case 1:13-cv-00001 Document 1-1 Filed 01/22/14 Page 1 of 1





Interview

with Special guest Ganesh

- GS - Good Morning, Ganesh
 GS - Good Morning, Green Sprout
 GS - How do you like Auroville?
 GS - I like it very much. Especially, I loved Bakery, Mass and making bread biscuits and making of vegetable and meat called "momo" along with chills vinegar.
 GS - Did you like Verite?
 GS - It was very interesting. Especially the wind mill, canal and kitchen.
 GS - You seem to be very interested in food!
 GS - Yes, very much - especially hot sour and spicy food.
 GS - Anything else you like about Auroville?
 GS - Lots and Lots of friends of all nationalities. Especially in and around Kottakadu.
 GS - Thank you for the interview, Ganesh.
 GS - Welcome.



Message
Bag



Did you enjoy the ~~mag~~ OUR TRIP TO AURVILLE?

What came in

SPORTS

OUR WINNER IS Aurpatic Kuroden Age 11 years
He solved it at 12/4/02 at 6 ~~years~~ ^{or less than 10 years} ~~years~~ ^{seconds only!!!}
Thank you

ANSWERS

A=4
B=3
C=5
D=2
E=1

Please give us articles for the issue
of SPORTS We are waiting
for them Send here

GREEN SPROUT

Barnard gate, Green Dun West,
Barnhampton 712134 G. B
26834685

e-mail: cs@vni.net

Book means
available



ISS



My Nature Garden
Book of Birds



ISS



CHILDREN'S MAGAZINE

2003

PACKED

ACTION

SPORTS


ISSUE JULY-AUGUST




GREEN SPROUT

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- INVENT HOME MADE GAME BY MANOSI & SHANTONU TRY IT! Pg 2
- ESSAY WHY CAN'T GIRLS PLAY WITH BOYS. BY MANOSI Pg 3
- COULD I BE THE GODS AGAINST DEMONS BY MANOSI Pg 4
- INTO THE WORLD OF BOOKS AND FILMS BY SHANTONU Pg 5
- MESSAGE BAG & INFO GREEN SPROUT Pg 6



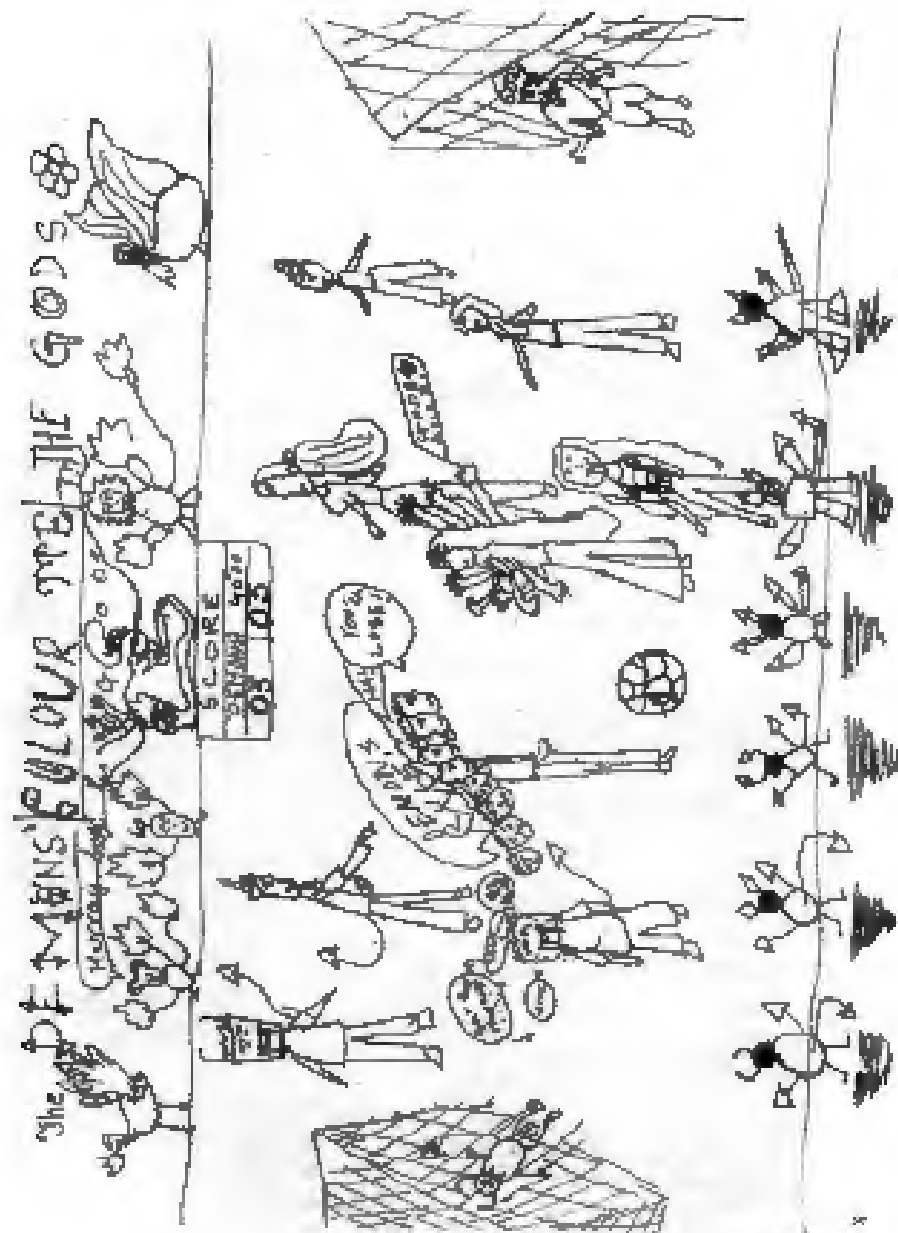
Godar  Our dream!

Jokes

Everyone must have witnessed tremors about encounters with the dangerous cauldron (ghat) and we are no exceptions. These incidents took place while we were playing.

Encounter No 1 Vikram Shrikho Shingho Day
It was about 5pm on a lovely Saturday evening. After considerable toil, I had managed to shake off the ball from the watery clutches of the pond when this incident took place. The four fellows could not see the smooth glistering patch of cauldron just in front of him and unwittingly stepped on it. After stepping on it, we performed a great gymnastic feat which even I have made any gymnast green with envy. He stretched our both legs the full 180° but we could not understand why Shrikho had suddenly decided to perform gymnastics. The truth dawned on us when, after a few seconds, he started crying, "Mama, Mama" (oh mother, oh mother). He stretched the thigh muscles so much that he remained injured for two days. After that incident, Shrikho does not go near cauldron in any form.





Into the World of Rocks and Gems.

Sunny Days - Sunil Gavaskar's biography, it is worth reading as it tells first hand about his life, it full of handy tips for aspiring cricketers and is packed with humour. We get to see his point of view and opinions about cricket, past, present and the future. Filled with photographs, it is a must for those crazy about Sunil Gavaskar.

Bored it like Beckham - The story of a young girl in
her teens who wants to play football like her idol, Bethan.
Beth, coming from an orthodox Indian family, Young ~~and~~ ^{is} ~~in~~
(the girl) hopes of becoming an international footballer are
thin, as her whole family forbids her dressing around "half naked"
in front of boys and men. But she managed to join a girls'
football club. But all was not well, even then. She still had to
face the threats from family, who strongly oppose her playing
football and friendship, which is like a complicated web. Finally
she manages to bond free; but is she successful or not? Find out!

Remember The Time - A true story of an American School where a Black man replaces the white coach of the school's rugby team. There are many protests but they are overcome and the school has a "mixed" team. They go on to win the championship but lose their captain in a tragic car accident. It is a story of American courage, humor and tragedy.

GREEN SPROUT

Message bag &
INFO

Surprised aren't you. Well if you want to win a prize hurry! Contest date ending at ~~the~~ 20. Dec. 20. Jan.

Did you like this Episode OR ISSUE?

I enjoyed it! Next issue is **TRAIN HAWKERS**

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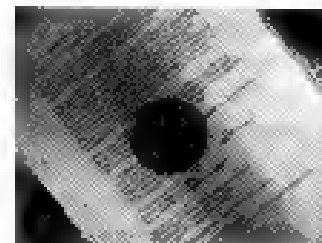
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Recommended Reading

Along with the books mentioned in the chapter, From the Ganapati Bookshelf, in Part I the following sources may be useful in conducting home-based activities.



NGA (National Gardening Association, USA)

Provides a good introduction to gardening and offers information on gardening skills:

• www.garden.org/edu

Green Teacher (Canada)

Ideas and examples on environmental education in schools and around the community:

• www.greenteacher.com

Foxfire (USA)

One of pioneer of connecting school learning process with community. The method and process of collecting local traditional knowledge done by high school students is worth knowing about:

• www.foxfire.org

Journey to Forever (Japan)

Information and case studies on alternative technologies from all over the world:

• <http://journeytoforever.org/jp>

Permaculture International (Australia and many other countries)

Lists Permaculture courses and has a Permaculture club for children called Food Foresters:

• www.permacultureinternational.org

The Edward de Bono Foundation (Ireland)

Information on creative thinking:

• www.edwarddebonofoundation.com

Skipping Stones (USA)

Publishes an attractive quarterly 'multicultural' children's magazine:

- www.skippingstone.org

LEAF (Learning and Ecological Activities Foundation for Children, Japan)

Organizes an Eco-Panel exhibition once a year; and you can participate in this by sending in your projects:

- <http://leaf.or.jp>

Daily Dump (India)

Promotes composting at home and school by providing 'how to' information and selling innovative and attractive composting tools:

- www.dailydump.org

Mustard Seeds (India)

Another example of a home-based community project, runs a home library and organizes various children's activities including a lot of kid-craft ideas:

- kodemocraft.blogspot.com / dalihat.blogspot.com

About Earthcare Books :

We are a publisher and distributor focusing on environmental issues, justice and an alternative path of progress in harmony with nature and fellow humans.

The areas we emphasize are:

- Care of natural 'resources' (soil, water, forests, biodiversity...)
- Ecological (organic) farming and traditional systems
- Indigenous and other appropriate technologies
- Non-formal education and environmental education
- Natural health and healing
- Alternative lifestyles, cultures and world-views

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